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# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

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## University Students' Beliefs about English Language Learning

Dr. Abdulaziz Saleh Alsamaani

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### Abstract

Learners' beliefs about foreign language learning have been stressed in educational research because they are regarded as fundamental to learners' progress. This paper deals with the results of a research project conducted among first-year English language majors studying the Intensive English Language Program at Qassim University. A total of 250 students volunteered to participate in this study. The instrument employed in the study is a modified Arabic version of Horwitz's (1987) BALLI (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory).

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Dr. Abdulaziz Saleh Alsamaani

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Students' beliefs were investigated in order to collect background information needed for exploring the overall beliefs of Saudi university students about learning English as a foreign language. Results reveal that Saudi university students have positive and realistic beliefs about foreign language as regard the nature of language learning, communication strategies, and motivation and expectations about learning English as a foreign language. The study recommends an identification of Saudi EFL teachers and learners' beliefs on a wider scale, so as to provide guidelines to EFL teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to tailor their teaching methods to meet learners' beliefs.

## **Introduction**

Nowadays, Knowledge of English has become an essential part of everyday life of the global world. Many people are using English in nearly every sector and for international relations. Ehrlich (2008) estimates that more than 300 million people are speaking English as their native language and more than 400 million are speaking it as a second or foreign language. Altan (2012) argues that the importance of English as a worldwide language has been increasing rapidly and more people are aware of the fact that at least some knowledge of English is necessary to get ahead in life since it brings high social status to the individual, as well as extending job opportunities. One variable which has received a lot of attention recently in the language learning process is beliefs about language learning which Horwitz (2007) considers as central constructs in every discipline which deals with human behavior. Learners' beliefs about themselves and about foreign languages and their learning have been in the focus of educational research because they are considered fundamental to learners' progress (e.g. Kormos et al, 2008; Bernat, 2006; Dörnyei, 2005; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Hosenfeld, 2003; Wenden and Rubin, 1987).

As the global economy continues to develop, so too does the need for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to prepare itself to be able to participate on an international level. One factor that seems to play a sizeable role in how well KSA can continue to flourish in the 21st century is the ability of its population to learn the language(s) necessary for efficient communication with other nations.

Daif-Allah (2010) observes that KSA has recently begun to recognize the need to promote multilingualism in the context of globalization since it cannot participate in the new economy through the medium of Arabic only. Everything shows that the future of KSA requires mastering at least one or two foreign languages besides the Arabic language.

In such a framework, the Saudi Ministry of Education has sent big numbers of graduate and undergraduate students to study in famous foreign universities worldwide. Locally, it has attempted to introduce foreign language teaching in primary classrooms (mainly English), besides the current mandatory study of English in both middle and high school.

Accordingly, the English language in the Saudi educational system today is fitting to present an overview of the role of English in KSA (Al-Hajailan, 2003). Foreign language classes in KSA start at the fourth grade (10-year-old) and English is one of the subjects taught in nearly all government-sponsored and private elementary education. Such an initiative responds to the growing concern for international participation as well as to the growing recognition of English as an international language.

To this end, understanding Saudi learners' beliefs has become a key element in developing foreign language proficiency because, as stated by Pajares (1992), identification of beliefs could help learners understand themselves and others as well as adapt to the world around them. In addition, beliefs have been linked with other learner variables, such as learning

strategies (Horwitz 1987, 1988; Wenden 1986) and foreign language anxiety (Horwitz 1988, 1989; Kunt 1997; Young 1991). In this context Cohen and Dörnyei (2002) concluded that certain beliefs about language learning have significant effect on learners' motivation to learn the target language; for example, unrealistic beliefs regarding the amount of time required to become proficient in a second language could obviously result in frustration.

Also, Horwitz's (1985) groundbreaking study showed that learners enter the language class with many preconceived ideas about language learning, some of which may be unrealistic; therefore she recommends a systematic assessment of such beliefs to increase learning and satisfaction in the foreign language (FL) class. Recently, Rad (2010) and Dörnyei (2005) found that learners' beliefs and viewpoints influence not only the way that they attempt to learn English but also the method that will be used by them. Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005) have emphasized the importance of studying foreign language learners' beliefs as a push or a pull factor to help learners' ultimate success in attainment of new language in a shorter time.

### **Research Problem**

The previous introduction shows a real need to investigate Saudi students' beliefs about foreign language learning. Such investigation will be an extension of what has been done in this regard in other international cultural contexts (Horwitz, 1988; Bacon & Finnemann, 1992; Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Cortazzi, & Jin, 1996; Peacock, 1999, 2001; Barcelos, 2003; Tercanlioglu, 2005; Ali & Ismail, 2005; Ismail, & Abdel-Majeed, 2006; Nathalie & Renaud, 2006; Bernat and Lloyd, 2007; Oz, 2007; Rieger, 2009; Diab, 2009; Rad, 2010; Altan, 2012). Although numerous studies have investigated learners' beliefs about foreign language learning in different countries, yet little is known about learners' beliefs about learning English as a foreign language in the Saudi context. Therefore, the present study seeks to fill a gap in locally situated research through

identifying the overall beliefs of novice university students about language learning in Saudi Arabia in relation to gender.

### **Research Questions**

The current study is an attempt to tackle Saudi learners' beliefs about learning English as a foreign language through answering the following question:

What beliefs do novice university students in Saudi Arabia have about learning English as a foreign language as regards ...

- 1) English language aptitude?
- 2) The difficulty of language learning?
- 3) The nature of language learning?
- 4) Learning and communication strategies? And,
- 5) Motivation and expectations?

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The present study seeks to examine the validity of the following hypotheses:

1. Saudi learners will show negative aptitude to English language learning.
2. Saudi learners believe that English language learning is difficult.
3. Saudi learners have unrealistic beliefs about the nature of English language learning.
4. Saudi learners are aware of the influence of English language learning strategies on their EFL achievement.
5. Saudi learners are not motivated to learn English as a foreign language.

### **Purpose of the Study**

As the researcher indicated earlier, studying the beliefs of learners is vital to have a clear understanding of their learning expectations. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the overall beliefs Saudi novice university learners have about learning English as a foreign language.

### **Significance of the Study**

The current study is significant for both theoretical and practical reasons. At the theoretical level, this study is important in two ways. First, it sheds light on an area of research in foreign language learning beliefs addressed extensively by applied linguists worldwide. Second, it provides information concerning Saudi students' beliefs about English language learning. At the practical level, the proposed study would help teachers understand learners' approaches to studying English and the type of goals they adopt in their language learning. Also, identification of learners' beliefs will provide guidelines to EFL teachers to tailor their teaching methods to avoid mismatches between classroom practices and learners beliefs.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Beliefs about Language Learning***

In the context of second/foreign language acquisition, beliefs are defined by Kuntz (1997) as “notions about language learning that students have acquired” (p.4). Likewise, Victori and Lockhart (1995) define beliefs as "general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing learning and about the nature of language learning" (p.224), whereas Banya and Cheng (1997) define beliefs as an individual's opinions about language learning. Also, Ehrlich (2008) describes beliefs as opinions and viewpoints which attend in every discipline of human behavior to say that something is true or right and vice versa.

Beliefs are also defined as ‘psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true’ (Richardson, 1996 p. 102). Dewy ( 1993) explained that beliefs are matters of which we have no sure knowledge, but feel confident to act upon, and matters that we accept as true, but which may be questioned in the future.

In this context, Sakui and Gaies (1998) propose three characteristics of beliefs about language and language learning: 1) beliefs are subjective understandings; 2) beliefs are relatively stable and 3) beliefs are idiosyncratic. First, beliefs are subjective; therefore, they do not necessarily reflect external reality. Beliefs reflect “truths” held by individuals and, therefore, are potentially facilitative for language learning (e.g., everyone can learn a language) or debilitating (e.g., boys are not good language learners). Second, beliefs about language learning should be stable over time, which indicates that beliefs are formed and maintained by a complex social and cultural system. Finally, Sakui and Gaies assert that belief systems are unique to individuals.

This last point has been emphasized by many researchers such as Mohebi (2011), Rad( 2010), and Horwitz (2007) who have attempted to investigate all aspects of English language learning beliefs. They found that each individual student has his/her own beliefs about foreign language learning and cognition about the strategies that has been used by teachers.

Accordingly, based on the extensive survey of literature, it can be concluded that beliefs guide action, but they are also affected by action( Richardson,1996). Beliefs are difficult to change if they are formed early in life (Pajares, 1992). Beliefs are socially constructed and culturally transmitted (Bernat, 2005). Beliefs have to be inferred from statements, intentions and actions (Pajares, 1992) and they are dynamic in the sense that they not only change over time , but may be expressed differently in different situations (Yang, 1999).

Evidence shows that these beliefs play a decisive role in language learners' success, failure and experiences (Cotterall, 1999). Pintrich and De Groot (1990) point out, for example, that learners who perceive their studies as important or interesting show higher degrees of perseverance in their work. Thus, knowledge of students' beliefs about language learning may provide language educators with a better understanding of their students' "expectations of, commitment to, success in and satisfaction with their language classes" (Horwitz, 1988, p.283).

Consequently teachers can make more informed choices about teaching (Bernat, & Gvozdenko, 2005) and adopt "a more sensitive approach to the organization of learning opportunities" (Cotterall, 1999, p.494) in their lessons. In addition, Nash (2001) has provided more evidence for the influence of beliefs on learners' acquisition ability by concluding that learners who have positive and realistic beliefs about learning English reached higher proficiency in English compared to those who did not have.

### **Previous Studies**

Investigation of learner beliefs has evolved out of a growing interest in individual learner characteristics with a particular focus on learners' affective and cognitive contributions to the language learning process. Beliefs about foreign language learning have been attracting considerable research interest in the past two decades. Horwitz is the first researcher trying to determine the beliefs of learners about foreign language learning. Horwitz (1988) has looked at the beliefs of American undergraduate students studying commonly taught languages. She developed a 34-item scale called Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI). She found that learner beliefs change very little over the whole semester, learner beliefs do not automatically change when learners are merely exposed to new methods, and learner beliefs were "quite well entrenched" (pp. 76). Since then the BALLI has been extensively used by many



researchers worldwide to describe, among others, the language learning beliefs of different language learners in different cultural contexts (Altan, 2006; Oz, 2007; Nathalie & Renaud, 2006; Rad, 2010; Buyukyazi, 2010), the impact of gender on beliefs (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992; Siebert, 2003; Tercanlioglu, 2005; Bernat and Lloyd, 2007 ) and pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs (Mattheoudakis, 2007; Diab, 2009).

In relation to the identification of learners' beliefs, Altan (2006) administered BALLI to a total of 248 foreign language major university students at five universities in Turkey. His findings confirm that pre-service teachers arrive at the task of language learning with definite preconceived notions of how to go about it. He suggested that foreign language teacher educators and teacher trainers should take these beliefs into account if they expect their students to be open to particular teaching methods and to receive the maximum benefit from them. Knowledge of learner beliefs about language learning should also increase teacher educators' understanding of how the future teaching of these people would be. Beliefs of learners have been investigated by Oz (2007) who searched beliefs about language learning of 470 Turkish EFL learners in secondary education. He concluded that learners' metacognitive knowledge or beliefs about language learning have variability in terms of social and educational contexts, age, gender, and stages of language learning.

In the French context, Nathalie & Renaud's study (2006) surveyed 1,305 university students enrolled in English and other foreign-language classes across year levels in four major universities. It explores the factors that promote or hinder multilingualism. The results suggest that the reasons first-year students typically have for studying a foreign language have more to do with internal factors (e.g., personal attitude) than with external factors (e.g., social value). Moreover, this trend becomes more pronounced with upper-year students whose motivation to

learn a foreign language compared with that of first-year students is influenced less by perceived societal beliefs and more by intrinsic reasons.

Rad's study (2010) is developed to probe what will be English Language Major Student's beliefs about learning English as foreign not second language. The results of this study showed that extend independent variables (age, gender and field of study) affect dependent variables (students' beliefs about English leaning) and that language learning strategies that have been applied by teachers influence students' learning.

Buyukyazi (2010) investigated the beliefs about language learning of 156 English as foreign language (EFL) students and 19 EFL teachers in the Department of Foreign Languages at Celal Bayar University of Manisa. The primary aim of the study was to explore what beliefs the students in prep classes held about learning EFL. The study also intended to determine if the beliefs of the learners and their teachers displayed a change. Data were collected using a 34-item Likert-Type scale (Horwitz's BALLI - Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory), modified for the Turkish EFL learners and their teachers. The results of this study demonstrated that EFL learners have a broad range of conceptions both similar to and different from those reported by their teachers.

As regard the impact of gender on learners' beliefs, Bacon and Finnemann (1992) investigated gender differences in self-reported beliefs about foreign language learning and authentic oral and written input. Bacon and Finnemann (1992) found that women in their study were more open to authentic input and possess a higher level of motivation and strategy use in language learning in addition to a higher level of social interaction with the target language (Spanish).

Siebert's (2003) BALLI based study, examining international university students in the United States, showed significant gender-related differences. The author found males rated their own fellow citizens' abilities more highly, and believed that a language could be learnt in a shorter time than women did. More male than female students also believed that the learning of grammar was the most important part of language learning, and that practicing with audio-visual material was crucial.

In contrast, Tercanlioglu (2005), found no significant differences in beliefs about language learning of 45 male and 73 female full-time undergraduate EFL teacher trainees at a Turkish university. She concluded age, stage of life, and contextual differences in the language-learning situation may also be important sources of group variation in learner beliefs.

Correspondingly, Bernat and Lloyd (2007) found that the males and females differed significantly in only two BALLI items, as women were more likely to perceive multilingualism as a feature of intelligence than men were, and also enjoyed talking to natives less than their male counterparts did. Since the role of gender is context specific and the results of previous studies yielded such a variety of different results, the effect of gender seems to be an area worth examining in the Hungarian context. Also, through using multiple-item scales, the results are less likely to be subject to extraneous influences.

Other studies have explored pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about foreign language learning and teaching. For example, Mattheoudakis (2007) investigated pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching in Greece, explored possible changes in those beliefs during a three-year teacher education program, and examined the effects of teaching practice on these teachers' beliefs. Findings revealed that the pre-service teachers' engagement

in the teaching practice did not have a high impact on the development of their beliefs, even though there was a gradual development in their beliefs during the program.

Similarly, Diab (2009) also explored the beliefs about language learning of prospective Lebanese EFL teachers as well as university EFL teachers and concluded that the teachers hold a variety of beliefs about language learning, some of which may be conducive to the language learning and teaching situation while others may constitute an impediment to successful language learning and teaching.

In the Saudi Arabian context, Ismail, & Abdel-Majeed (2006) examined the epistemological beliefs of gifted EFL students compared to non-gifted ones. Four tools were used for data collection, including an Epistemological Beliefs Questionnaire, a Goal Orientation Questionnaire, a Cognitive Engagement Questionnaire, and a Perceived Linguistic Competence Questionnaire. Students' achievement was assessed by their GPAs. These tools were administered to a cohort of 163 (37 gifted, 126 non-gifted) EFL students in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth levels at Riyadh Teachers' College. Findings of the study indicated that gifted EFL students possess sophisticated epistemological beliefs along the six epistemological belief dimensions. Variance in development among belief dimensions did exist with beliefs in the "integration of knowledge" being the most sophisticated and beliefs in the "source of knowledge" the most naive. Findings of the study also indicated that gifted EFL students hold more sophisticated epistemological beliefs than their non-gifted peers. Statistically significant differences were found between gifted and non-gifted students in five of the six dimensions under investigation. No significant difference was found between the two groups in the "source of knowledge" dimension. Further, findings of the study indicated that some epistemological dimensions can potentially predict given psychological constructs but not others.

Through the previous studies discussed above, it is clear that more research is needed to investigate beliefs about foreign language learning in other cultural contexts specially the Saudi context. Therefore, this study tries to identify novice Saudi university female/male learners' beliefs about English language learning and the relationships between such beliefs and English language learning outcomes.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

English major students of the Intensive English Language Program (IELP) at Qassim University were invited to participate in the study. The students were given a brief, informative oral overview of the nature and purpose of the study before implementing the questionnaire. A total of 250 first-year English language major students volunteered to participate in this study. Of these, 130 were males (52%) and 120 were females (48%). The mean age of the participants was 20.2 years, rating from 19-22 years. The students' average experience in studying English was six years. The participants included in this study share important common characteristics with most English language major students in Saudi Arabia. They all belong to state university, they all belong to the same level of education, and they follow the same curriculum.

### ***Instrument***

The instrument used in this study is called the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) that is initially created by Horwitz to collect data regarding the beliefs of adult learners about frequently taught languages.

Three distinct BALLIs are in use today: one for ESL students (Horwitz, 1984, Horwitz, 1987), another for foreign language teachers (Horwitz, 1985), and a third for foreign language students (Horwitz, 1988, Horwitz, 1999).

The foreign language students' BALLI consists of 34-items which are related to five areas: 1) English language aptitude; 2) the difficulty of language learning; 3) the nature of language learning; 4) learning and communication strategies; and, 5) motivation and expectations.

The questionnaire for the present study was designed based on five point Likert scale which measures respondents' interest according to their level of agreement or disagreement from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The statements on a Likert scale should be either expressing a positive/favorable or a negative/unfavorable attitude towards the object of interest. Although the Likert-scale was originally developed to measure attitudes, its scope has been extended to wider cognitive and affective variables, including beliefs (Altan, 2012; Buyukyazi, 2012; Rad, 2010; Diab, 2009; Horwitz, 1988).

The inventory was almost not changed since the purpose of this study was to reproduce and expand on Horwitz's 1988 study in a Saudi context. Only two items were modified so that they could be expressed in KSA and be suitable for the Saudi context. The Saudi version was translated into Arabic by the present researcher so that students would understand items easily and their responses to the questionnaire items would reflect their true beliefs. To assess the level of reliability of the adapted questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted on twenty students. The feedback from the pre-administration showed that the questionnaire was completely appropriate for research aims. Also Cronbach alpha of this study is 0.74 which shows acceptable consistency of reliability.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were obtained by distributing the questionnaire to 250 male/female students studying the Intensive English Language Program at Qassim University during 2011/12. The

forms were completed anonymously in class. However, only 236 questionnaires (125 males-111 females) were eligible to be used in the study. After summarizing and tabulating the information obtained from the background questionnaire, data were analyzed using SPSS 15.0 package program. Frequencies, mean scores and percentages were used to analyze single BALLI items. The differences between male and female learners were determined via a t-test for independent samples. Significant levels were set at  $p < 0.05$ .

### **Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study is that there was an imbalance of the number of the females and males students (111 females and 125 males). In addition, the total number should have been bigger to be representative for a wider range of Saudi learners.

### **Results and Discussion**

The purpose of the present study is to explore the overall beliefs of Saudi university students about learning English as a foreign language. The discussion for the data presented in tables 1-6 and figures 1-6 below provides the answer to the research Question " What beliefs do novice university students in Saudi Arabia have about learning English as a foreign language as regard English language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivation and expectations?" In the study aiming to investigate the learners' beliefs about foreign language learning, the researcher analyzed the frequencies, and the results were given as percentages in the following tables. Two positively worded points (agree and strongly agree) and two negatively worded points (disagree and strongly disagree) were grouped together so as to find out whether the participants had positive or negative beliefs on one item. The categories suggested by Horwitz (1988) were used

for data categorization. In each category, the beliefs of learners were presented in percentages and the significance value was given.

The results are presented in areas as categorized in the following tables:

**Table (1): Foreign language aptitude**

Statements	Total Agree		Total Disagree		Undecided	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	189	80%	32	14%	15	6 %
2. Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a foreign language.	104	44%	61	26%	71	30%
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	127	54%	56	24%	53	22%
15. I have foreign language aptitude.	186	79%	20	8%	30	13%
22. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	61	26%	85	36%	90	38%
29. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.	54	23%	112	47%	70	30%
32. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.	117	50%	72	30%	47	20%
33. Saudis are good at learning foreign languages.	171	72%	254	108 %	47	20%
34. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	161	68%	22	9%	53	22%



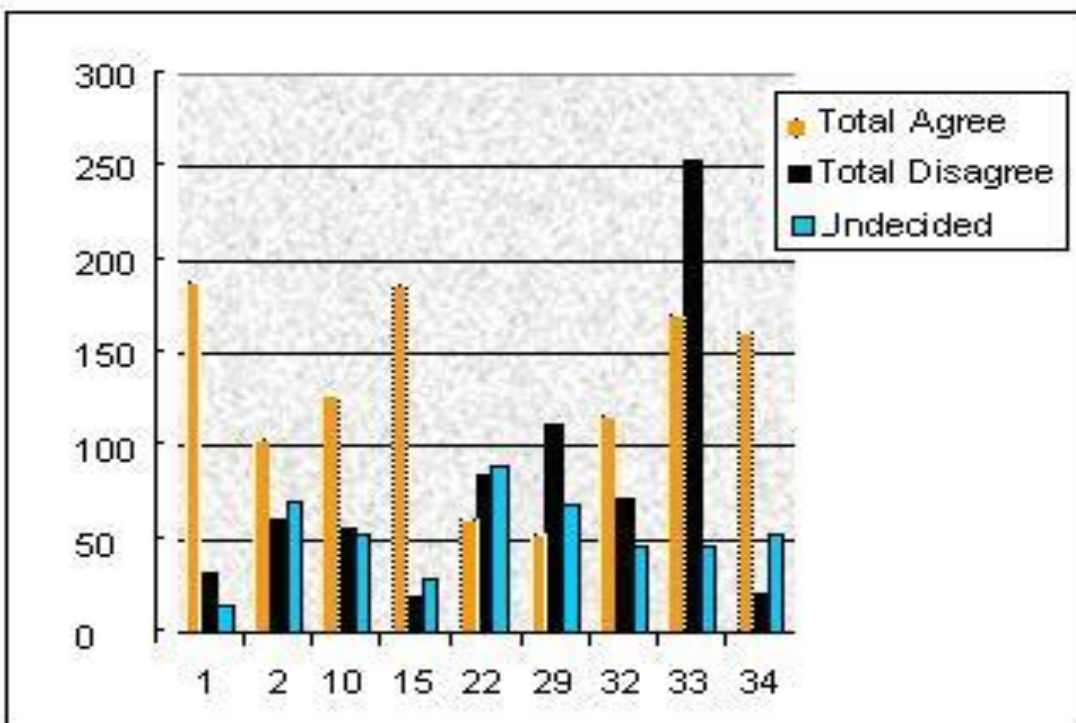
The items 1, 2, 10, 15, 22, 29, 32, 33 and 34 shown in the above table are related to the foreign language aptitude (FLA) and focus on the broad existence of specific abilities for language learning and beliefs about the traits of successful and unsuccessful language learners. First, 80% of the respondents in this study either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that ‘It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language’, consistent with the common wisdom that children are better language learners than adults.

Thus, participants hold beliefs consistent with many research studies showing a positive effect of young age on language acquisition, especially pronunciation (Donato, Antonek, and Tucker 1996). Nevertheless, the popular belief that children are more successful language learners than adults is an unrealistic one that may discourage many adult language learners.

Participants also supported the concept of foreign language aptitude or special abilities for foreign language learning. 79% believed that they possess a special aptitude for foreign language learning. This language aptitude was stressed as culture specific because 72 % of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that Saudis were good at learning foreign languages. The results indicate that the participants have positive evaluations of their own language learning abilities since they are all English major students, not just students studying English as a foreign language. For this reason 68 % either strongly agreed or agreed that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.

Moreover, the participants hold moderate opinions regarding the importance of gender in language learning: 26% believed that women are better than men at learning foreign languages, while 36% disagreed and another 38 % were uncertain with this statement. With reference to the effects of intelligence on language learning, 50% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that ‘people who speak more than one language are very intelligent’; however, 30% were

unsure about the effects of one’s intelligence on acquiring additional languages. Also, 44% of the participants indicated that some people are born with a special ability to learn a foreign language, while 26 either strongly disagreed or disagreed with this opinion. Additionally, 54% agreed that it is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one. Finally, 47% of respondents did not believe that being good at mathematics or science meant that one would not be good at learning foreign languages. This shows that the majority of respondents do not make a distinction between an aptitudes for the sciences versus an aptitude for foreign language learning. These results are clearly illustrated in Figure 1 below.



**Figure (1): Foreign language aptitude**

Table 2 below provides information about items 3, 4, 6, 14, 24 and 28 that show the common difficulty of learning a foreign language.

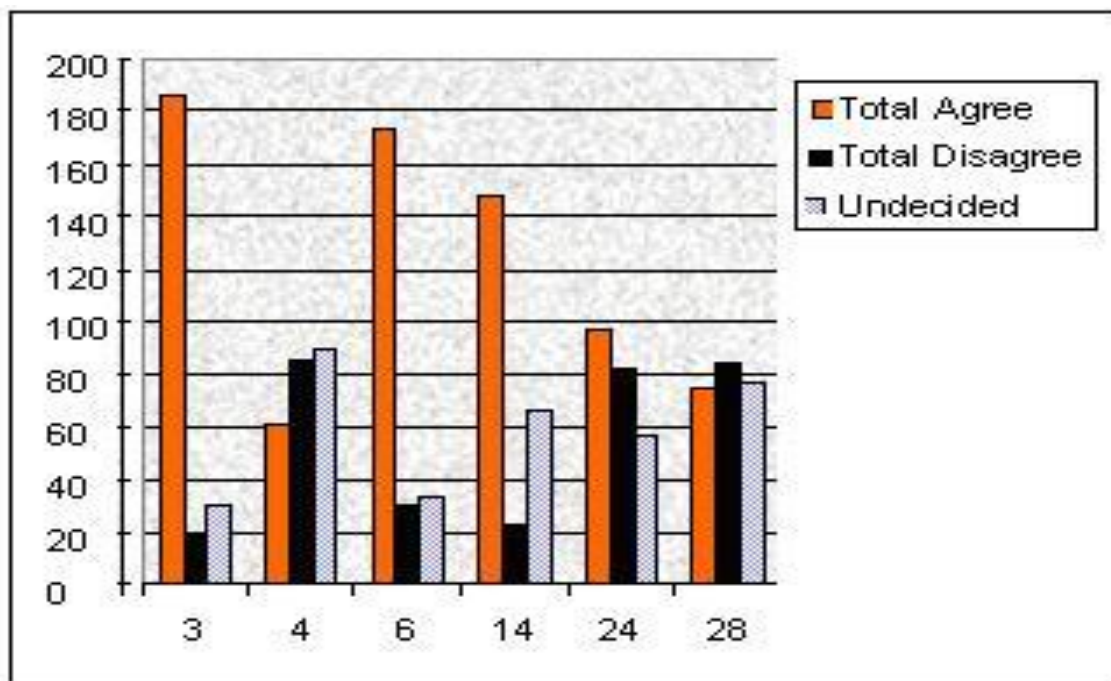
**Table (2): Difficulty of language learning**

Statements	<i>Total Agree</i>		<i>Total Disagree</i>		<i>Undecided</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others	186	79%	20	8%	30	13%
4. The language I am trying to learn is very difficult.	61	26%	86	36%	89	38%
6. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.	173	73%	30	13%	33	14%
14. A language learner needs at least four years to learn about the language and use it fluently.	148	63%	22	9%	66	28%
24. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	97	41%	82	35%	57	24%
28. It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.	75	32%	84	36%	77	33%

The above table shows that the majority of the students (79%) agreed that some languages are easier than others. In response to item 6, students were very optimistic and showed a high level of self-confidence in learning English as a foreign language and explained that they will learn that language well as seen by 73% of the sample. The issue of the length of time it would take to learn a foreign language well was clear in students' minds. It was very positive for most of them (63%) to believe that learning foreign language well needs at least four years of intensive study to learn about the language and to be able to use it fluently. This realistic belief is based on the respondents' awareness of the requirements of their future occupation as English

teachers. In terms of the difficulty of the English language, 36% disregarded English as a language of extreme difficulty. Only 26% of respondents regarded English as a very difficult language to learn. With respect to the difficulty of the language skills, mainly speaking and understanding, 41% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that it is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language, and 35% of respondents believed that it is easier to understand than to speak a foreign language, while 24% were unsure. Additionally, 36% of respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed that it is easier to read than write in a foreign language; however, 32% agreed. A further 33% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. These results are clearly illustrated in Figure 2 below.

**Figure (2): Difficulty of language learning**

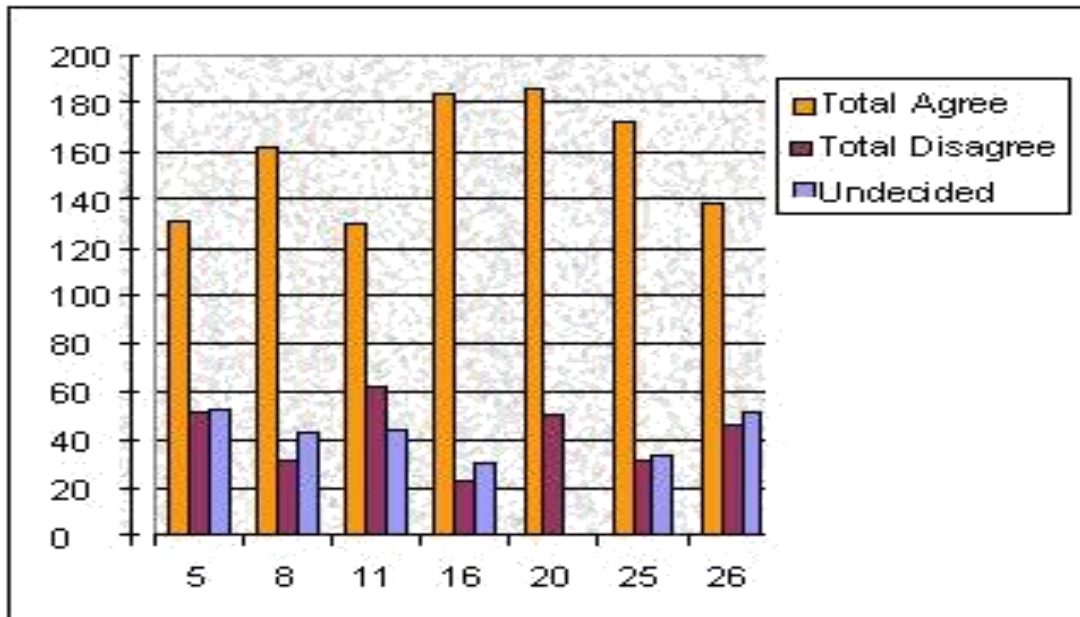


The following table illustrates participants' beliefs about the nature of language learning through presenting their responses to items 5, 8, 11, 16, 20, 25 and 26.

Statements	Total Agree		Total Disagree		Undecided	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
5. The structure of English is different from that of Arabic.	131	56%	52	22%	53	22%
8. It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language. .	162	69%	31	13%	43	18%
11. It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.	130	55%	62	26%	44	19%
16. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.	184	79%	22	9%	30	12%
20. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of a lot of grammar rules.	186	79%	50	21%	0	0%
25. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.	172	73%	31	13%	33	14%
26. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.	138	59%	46	19%	52	22%

Table 3 above indicates that the majority of the respondents (79%) believed that learning new words and a lot of grammar rules are the most important parts of language learning. In addition, 59% emphasized the role of translation in fostering English language acquisition. Such students hold a specific belief that translation is a valued learning strategy. These results can be referred to respondents' previous experience of studying English for six years in the middle and high school and taking theoretical courses emphasizing the importance of developing linguistic

competence over communicative competence. They are very much affected by the grammar-translation method used by their school teachers and for this reason they have developed the belief that both vocabulary and grammar are necessary for building fluency. An additional majority of respondents, 73%, agreed that ‘learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects’. BALLI items 8 and 11 emphasize the role of cross-culture awareness in the language learning acquisition. Students are of the opinion that learning a language away of its culture is a waste of time. 69% believed that it is necessary to know the culture of the people whose language they are studying in order to speak the language and understand those who use it as a mother tongue. Another 55% either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that ‘it is best to learn English in an English-speaking country’, where there is a greater exposure to the foreign language, its culture and its people. Finally, 56% of the respondents stated that the structure of English is very different from that of Arabic. This result is expected since Arabic and English do not belong to the same language family. These results are clearly illustrated in Figure 3 below.



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Figure (3): The nature of language learning

The items (7, 9, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19 and 21) shown in the Table 4 below deal with learning and communication strategies and are directly related to a learner's actual language learning practices.

Table (4): Learning and communicating strategies

Statements	Total Agree		Total Disagree		Undecided	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
7. It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent pronunciation and accent.	153	65%	47	20%	36	15%
9. You shouldn't say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.	52	22%	131	56%	53	22%
12. If I heard some people speaking the language I am trying to learn, would go up to them so that I could practice	193	82%	11	5%	32	13%

speaking the language.						
13. It's o.k. to guess if you don't know a word in the foreign language	138	59%	45	19%	53	22%
17. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	196	84%	20	8%	20	8%
18. I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.	168	71%	30	13%	38	16%
19. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on.	110	47%	71	30%	55	23%
21. It is important to practice in the language laboratory	178	76%	31	13%	27	11%

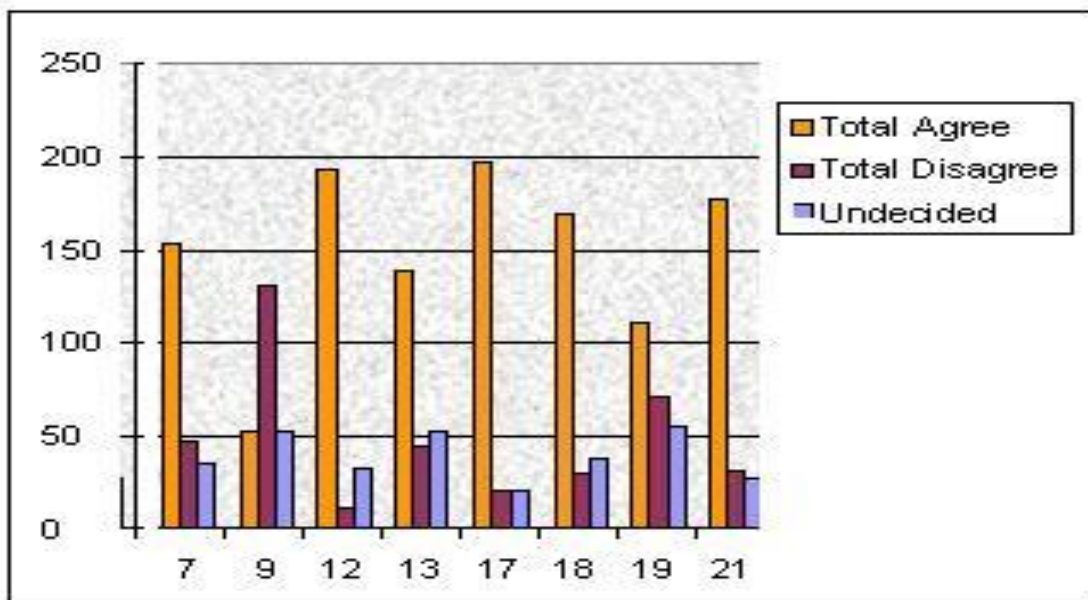
In the above tables, items 17 and 21 refer to learning strategies, and items 7, 9, 12, 13, 18 and 19 concern communication strategies. First, with reference to ‘traditional’ learning strategies most of the respondents (76%) acknowledged the benefit of technology for conducting repetition drills and practicing English in language laboratories. A further 84% of the participants agreed that it is ‘important to repeat and practice a lot’. Although these results reflect the learning strategies that participants used to practice at the pre-university levels, yet 82% of them realized the importance of practicing English with the English speaking people they meet.

As regard participants feeling when they use English in real life situations, 71% of respondents feel embarrassed when they communicate with native speakers of the language. However, this result depends on participants' educational level and their familiarity of meeting people who speak a foreign language. Guessing meaning from oral and written context is a necessary skill for foreign language learners. For this reason, more than half of the participants (59%) believed that ‘it is OK to guess if you don’t know a word in English’. This belief would



help participants feel relaxed and unworried about vague words in communication. It would also encourage them not to rely on dictionaries all the times and to depend on themselves in getting the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context confidently without being nervous about having to understand each single word. Therefore, 56% of the participants disagreed with the notion that one should not say anything in English until one can say it grammatically correctly. This belief shows that participants are acknowledging fluency over accuracy. However, 65% of respondents believed that it is important to speak English with ‘excellent pronunciation’. This last result indicates that the participants view pronunciation correctness as more important than grammatical accuracy. In addition, 47% strongly agreed or agreed that ‘If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on’, while 30% disagreed.

These findings indicate that participants of the study seem to hold unrealistic beliefs regarding accuracy and error correction, which, if not challenged, may negatively affect their learning process in the language classes. These results are clearly illustrated in Figure 4 below.



**Figure (4): Learning and communicating strategies**

BALLI items 23, 27, 30 and 31 in Table 5 below deal with participants' motivation and expectations of learning English as a foreign language.

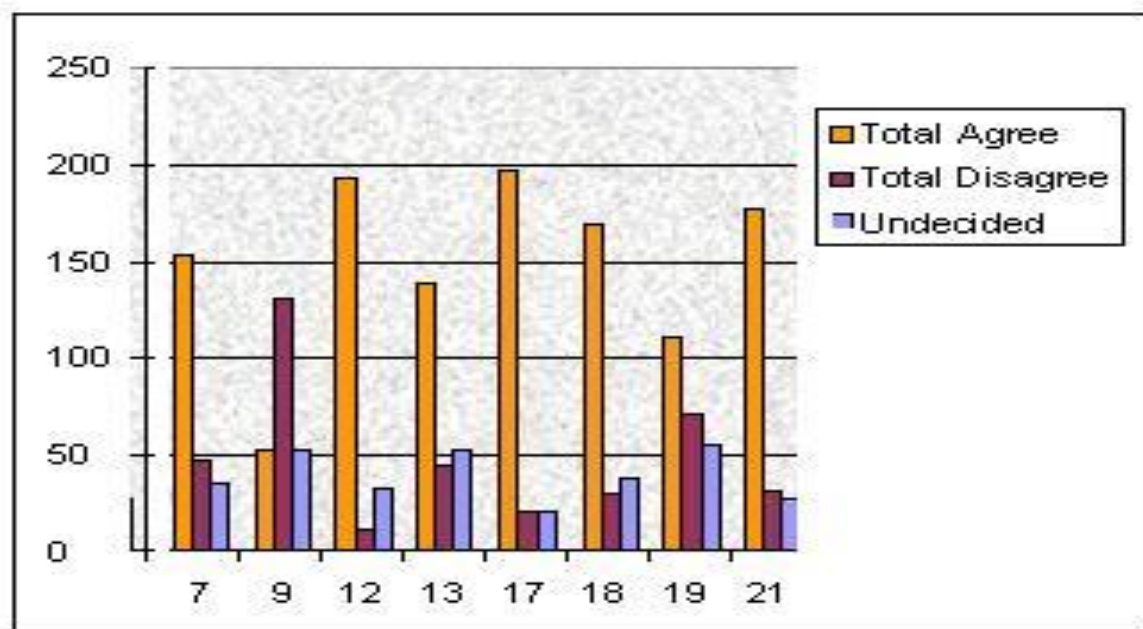
**Table (5): Motivations and Expectations**

Statements	<i>Total Agree</i>		<i>Total Disagree</i>		<i>Undecided</i>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
23. If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	211	90%	15	6%	10	4%
27. If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a good job.	187	80%	14	6%	35	14%
30. Saudis think that it is important to speak a foreign language.	178	76%	33	14%	25	10%
31. I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better	201	85%	11	5%	24	10%

The above table shows that almost all the participants (90%) are instrumentally motivated to learn English. Also, 80% realize that if they learn to speak English well, they will be able to get a good job. Another 85% of the participants are interactively motivated to learn to speak English as a foreign language because they are highly interested in getting to know its speakers better. In addition, 76% either strongly agreed or disagreed that Saudis hold a belief that learning a foreign language has become a necessity. These realistic beliefs reflect participants' awareness that learning a foreign language has become a key factor which helps to cope with the requirements of globalization. Participants came to appreciate that accuracy of English and

linguistic abilities are necessary tool that might determine the nature of their future careers as well as their social status in worldwide communities.

To assess the participants' general beliefs about learning English as a foreign language, statistical analysis was conducted in order to measure the five-Likert mean of respondents rating. According to Likert scale, 5 represents high level of agreement and 1 indicates high degree of disagreement. To make results more understandable, mean analysis will be categorized into 4 parts representing levels of students' beliefs where 1.00-1.99 indicates weak belief, 2.00-2.99 points to neutral belief, 3.00-3.99 shows strong belief, and 4.00-5.00 illustrates very strong beliefs. These results are clearly illustrated in Figure 5 below.



**Figure (5): Motivations and Expectations**

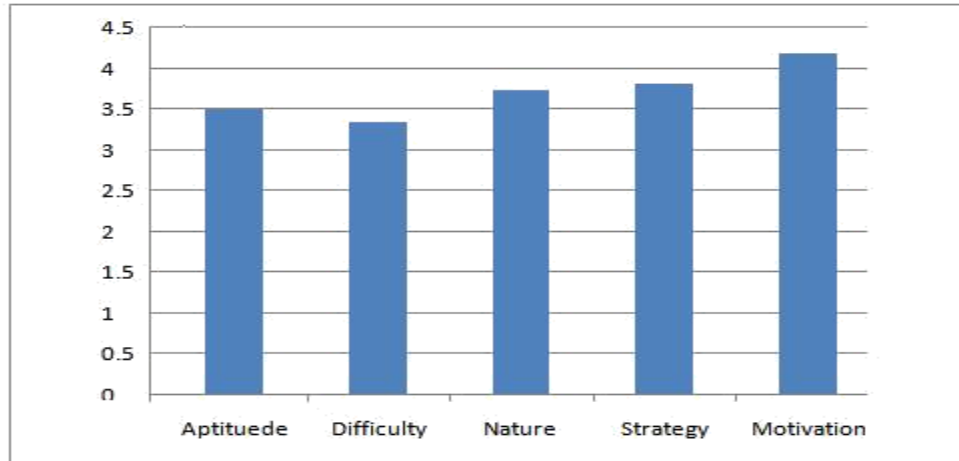
The following table, Table 6, provides Analysis of students' general beliefs about learning English as a foreign language.

**Table (6) Analysis of students' general beliefs about learning English as a foreign language**

Area	Mean	Standard deviation
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English language aptitude	3.501412	0.548099
The difficulty of English language learning	3.346751	0.363414
The nature of language learning	3.727603	0.247494
Learning and communication strategies	3.81303	0.424463
Motivation & expectation	4.191737	0.241398

The mean of Students' beliefs about learning English illustrated in Table 6 above and Figure 1 below shows that Saudi university students' beliefs ranges from strong to very strong. Participants' demonstrated a very high level of motivation and expectations about learning English as a foreign language since this area tops all other four areas with an average weighted mean of 4.19. This finding shows that Saudi EFL learners believed that the motivation factors have a great role on their learning process. Therefore, developing students' motivation and understanding their expectations will significantly affect students' English language learning. This result, therefore, disproves the validity of the fifth research hypothesis " Saudi learners are not motivated to learn English as a foreign language ". However, participants showed strong beliefs that English language learning is a difficult task to accomplish and accordingly confirms the validity of the second research hypothesis "Saudi learners believe that English language learning is difficult ". Also, disproving the validity of the first research hypothesis " Saudi learners will show negative aptitude to English language learning ", Saudi students show positive aptitude to English language learning with weighted mean of 3.5 .



**Figure (6): Means for the five areas of students' beliefs about learning English as a foreign Language**

Also, as illustrated in Figure 1 above, the results demonstrate strong realistic beliefs about the nature of language learning as the weighted mean for participants' belief exceeded 3.7 which indicates strong significant belief and therefore disproves the validity of the third research hypothesis "Saudi learners have unrealistic beliefs about the nature of English language learning". Moreover, participants expressed a strong belief that learning and communication strategies will influence their endeavors to achieve success in the English language learning process and hence validates the fourth research hypothesis " Saudi learners are aware of the influence of English language learning strategies on their EFL achievement " .

### **Conclusion and Implications**

The purpose of this study was to explore the overall beliefs Saudi novice university learners have about learning English as a foreign language. Using a modified Arabic version of Horwitz's (1987) BALLI , the results reveal that Saudi university students have positive and realistic beliefs about foreign language as regard motivation and expectations about learning English as a foreign language, the nature of language learning and communication strategies.

A number of pedagogical implications can be gleaned from the present study. Firstly, identification of learners' beliefs and reflection on their possible effect on language learning may lead to increased awareness and even adjustment of their expectations. Secondly, the identification of Saudi learners' beliefs might provide guidelines to EFL teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to tailor their teaching methods to avoid mismatches between classroom practices and learners' beliefs. Finally, educators might take learners' prior beliefs about EFL learning into account when designing language learning syllabi because any material taught in the EFL program will have to correspond with those prior beliefs and other gender, social, personal, cultural, cognitive and affective factors.

Due to the small size of population in the present study, it appears difficult to generalize the findings of this research to the entire population of English language students in Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, future research is needed to be carried out on a wider scale so as to investigate the role learners' beliefs across different populations, contexts, majors and age groups. Additional studies are also necessary to get a better understanding of the nature and development of language beliefs among EFL teachers and learners. Research as such will develop teachers' awareness of learners' beliefs of language learning as well as their own so as to assist less successful language learners to become successful. Finally, a careful investigation of language teachers' beliefs about language learning might develop the design and content of EFL teacher education programs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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## A Creative Response to Poetic Creation: A New Aesthetic for Critical Appreciation

Dr. J. S. Anand, Ph.D.

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### Abstract

Poetry is coming into life of a moment, which then starts growing, and acquiring an entity of its own; it leaves behind its parent, the poet, and even the reader has no control over it. Controlling such a living object is fraught with dangerous consequences, and the utmost danger is that: its originality, its freshness, its identity, and its ultimate dignity and charm can be lost, if it is looked at through colored glasses. Whenever a reader approaches a poem, if he is a student of English literature, he immediately wants to know who the author was/is, then he goes on to determine his age, and then, before he has looked into the poem, he tries to locate the school to which the author belonged/s. Doesn't this affect the originality of response? Doesn't it affect the originality of the text? Doesn't it compromise the dignity of the poem?

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This article tries to analyze the effect of approaching a poem or a poet with a pre-formed mind, laden with pre-conceived notions. When a reader has already formed a view that the poet is from this school of thought, half the meaning of the poem is already super imposed. For example, a poem by William Wordsworth is expected to be a romantic creation, and before the poem is approached, a whole plethora of impressions regarding romantic poetry starts making a web in the mind of the reader, ultimately fixing the poem in those parameters, whether or not it was a romantic one. In other words, an attempt has been made to assess how far it is right to study a poem by first of all referring to a writer's affiliations with a particular school of poetry.

The article further goes on to argue that dividing literature into various schools and then applying the parameters of these schools of poetic creation is a self-defeating exercise, because when a poem is created, the schools become non-functional, ideology takes a back seat, and the poem is complete in itself, without accruing to it any meanings beyond the text. Another argument that the author wishes to make here is that the school system is only an attachment; it makes the poetic flow develop a heavy weight of isms, and poetry, instead of being an original flight, turns into a highly calculated exercise, marring its originality, its freshness, and its individual identity. The critics often end up turning the poem into a cripple, unable to sustain itself, unless it is being given a prop of the ideology to which the poet belonged.

### **For Whom the Pen Rolls!**

The major question here is: for whom the poetry has been composed. Is it only for students of English literature? Or is it for general consumption? It is difficult to believe that a poem has been written for a select few. Once a poetic creation has taken shape on the paper, after that, it belongs to the world. It belongs to society. Just as the kids belong to the human race, so does a poem, once created, joins its ranks among the mortals as well as the immortals of creativity. In the sky, there are some stars which are visible. There have been so many which are not visible. Same is the case with poets. Some are shining like stars. Some are simply invisible. But a poem once created ceases to belong to one person. By using copyright, a poet can claim

his right over the body of the poem, but its mind belongs to the human race and its fragrance does not abide by the rules of the copyright.

### **“We Murder to Dissect”**

The teachers and the students of literature believe that it is for them to declare whether a poem is a romantic creation, or it belongs to the neo-classics, or the sentimentalists, or the moderns. Our examiners too ask such questions when they demand of a student to critically examine a poetic text. If a student is unable to place an English author into an age or a school, he is labeled as unread in literature. But, it is a highly contestable idea to think that literature is written for a few in the departments who sit on the coffee tables, and decide which poet belongs to which age, and which poem has romantic elements. I wonder if any student down the centuries has ever tried to find anything else out of the poetic works of William Wordsworth, other than that his creations had romantic elements. It would be really surprising if someone were to discover romantic elements from Pope’s poetry. It is difficult to swallow the idea that T.S. Eliot was a modern, and had nothing of a romantic or a neo-classicist. In fact, what our scholars are doing with poetry is an injustice of sorts. They approach a poem with pre-conceived notions. And when a plastic coating is done around a plant, it refuses to grow. It loses its original shine. It also loses its nutritional value. This is what is happening to poetry, which is subjected to clinical tests, with a hypothesis that it belongs to a particular school, and then, hence proved. It is not appreciation; it is a travesty of the whole idea of appreciation. Wordsworth was not far from reality when he said: “We murder to dissect”. If ‘dissection’ can be taken to mean compartmentalization of poetry, certainly, we end up murdering it. Although he said it in a different vein, what he said is quite apt in our context here. Clinical dissection with pre-formed ideas plays with the life of the patient, here the poetic creation, and may prove things which do not belong to it.

### **How Ordinary People React – Well Beyond Critical Tools**

If poetry and literature are meant for people, as the case in reality is, it is more important how ordinary people interpret it. They are not trained in the application of critical tools. They

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are not aware of schools. They are not ready to dissect it. For them, poetry is meant for aesthetic pleasure. And they love the poems which connect directly with their blood. Poems which elude the understanding of common people, turn into elitist, and lose their vast spectrum of influence, that is the common people at large.

### **Individuality of the Poem, the Poet and the Reader under Threat**

In the critical exercise, what the people tend to ignore is the individuality of the creation, the creator, and the receiver. A poem is an individual piece, and the poet has written it at an individual moment, and the reader too is an individual person, receiving the poem at an individual moment. This first impression of the poem on the reader, and of the reader on the poem, must be more lasting than the meanings which are heaped upon them, as a result of their belonging to different schools. When a poet is conceiving a poem, it can be said with a fair amount of certainty that he is not aware of his school of thought. *Creation is a highly natural phenomenon which relates more to his blood, than to his mind. The creator is a representative of the Muse, not of any ideology, at the moment of creation. It is a sacred and hallowed moment, like the birth of a child, which is a cosmic event, with all its ramifications.*

The moment the reader is reading the poem is also a moment invested with great significance. This is the moment which can turn him into a Revolutionary. But it will happen only when the march towards a poem is not tempered with any pre-laid notions. When a reader moves towards a poem with a clean slate, the poem can work on his mind like an x-ray machine, and leave its imprints on the canvas. *If the mind is already crowded with theories, and critical practices, no poem can have an individual reception. Like birth and death, which are individual events, poetic creation and poetic reception too are highly individualized events, at which crowds are not allowed.*

The best appreciation of a poem is whether it serves to improve the lot of society, or it says nothing except the grief of the poet. It might matter how it is all expressed, which falls into the realm of expression, and carries its importance so far as aesthetic joy is concerned, yet

imprisoning the poem into a cage, and then, expecting it to fly, is an unjust passion, which has become a fashion among our critical canonists.

### **Creative Response to Poetic Creation**

No genuine critic of poetry likes a poem which does not fall in the already cut out and closely defined categories of critical perception. They have a great limitation which forces them to think about a poem in a set fashion. Even if the poem has an identity beyond their notions, they try to beat it down, and prune its wings, so that it could be roasted or turned into chicken tikka only. They cannot afford to create out of it anything that is new simply because they have never learnt to fly, they have never thought that something new could be said, they have always believed that what they have known is final; and they do not believe anyone else can say anything more than they have read or known.

What is felt lacking here is a creative response to creativity, leaving the beaten track, and giving allowance to a poet to say things which general norms do not expect from him. *Just as every man born to this earth, who may belong to a particular religion, still has an individual destiny, because he is born different, he lives differently, and individually, and he dies too in a highly individual manner, similar argument can be extended to a poetic creation as well. More than belonging to any school, it is an original creation, independent, self-created, breathing a life of its own, and representing a truth, evident to the poet at that moment. Poetry is coming into life of a moment, which then starts growing, and acquiring an entity of its own, it leaves behind its parent, the poet, and even the reader has no control over it. Controlling such a living object is fraught with dangerous consequences, and the utmost danger is that its originality, its freshness, its identity, and its ultimate charm can be lost, if is looked at through colored glasses.*

### **Dividing Poets in Schools**

The study of English literature has been based on various schools of poetry. There is no harm in these divisions, for the sake of understanding, but still, it can be a better alternative if these schools and their defining parameters do not start dictating the response of the readers of

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poetry. Who has seen the Tropic of Capricorn? Or even the Equator? These are imaginary lines. Same is the case with these schools. However, it is better understood when literary divisions are made on the basis of representative figures like Victorian novel, Jacobian drama, Restoration period. But when it comes to romantic age, and the age of reason, these dividing lines become more illusory, and at the same time, cause hurdles in a creative response to poetic creation, when they crowd the mind of the innocent reader with a thousand preconceptions, which, thereafter, he starts applying to these unsuspecting poems.

### **Varying Moments and Varying Poetry**

There is one more argument in favour of my assertions above. These days, so many people are creating poetry. Sometimes, the same mind comes up with a highly tragic poem, which resembles Hardy's 'Lines Written in a Country Church Yard' and sometimes, the same heart spring up with a romantic lyric like 'The Solitary Reaper'. One can find another moment in the life of the same poet when he is writing heroic couplets and churning out poems in the vein of Pope. In the case of such a poet, how can anybody, any trained mind, decide to which period, or even to which school he belongs? Moreover, it is only an imposition if one is to accept that the romantic era did not have writers who wrote in the vein of the sentimentalists, or even, Pope's heroic couplets.

### **Surgery upon a Poem**

Relating a poetic creation to schools is like tying a heavy weight on the wings of the poem, and cripple it in its flight. The reader, whose mind is injected with a heavy dose of theoretical perceptions, captures the poem, makes it lie on the operation table, gives in anesthesia, and then, tries to find out, from its system, what he had been told to find. The 'trained' mind of the reader is incapable of thinking that the poem, lying on the operation table, is a living identity, and it deserves personal treatment and before that, one has to recognize its independence, its identity to be, and then approach it safeguarding its dignity. The way a poem is approached in the literary canon is like making it stand before a cannon, and then blast it into pieces. A poem is an organic whole, and trying to deconstruct it or analyzing it by applying any

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other critical theories might show in it what dwells in the mind of the reader, and it may or may not be in the poem, or its creator. A poem no doubt completes its journey work when it lands in the heart of the reader and starts communicating with him. It lights up his mind and gets lighted up with his brilliance. But this union of the poem and the receptor must be a highly creative event, in which the poem is respected as a whole individual and fresh for the reader, as a bride on her bridal night.

### **Conclusion – Let Us Not Put Poetic Creation into Bundles!**

It can be safely argued that these divisions of ages and schools are only a literary convenience, and they should not be made to stand between the poet and his creation on one side; and between the poem and the receptor on the other. Teaching these schools to the students of English literature without making allowance for a dispassionate, unprejudiced and individual approach to a poem, or say, a creative response, would end up ‘killing’ a poem, because, as already stated, a poem is an independent entity, and not to talk of a school, it does not belong to the same mind, at different moments of creation. Poetry demands an approach which is tinged with no pre-thought school, and which is fresh for each piece. Poetry is written for the people and the people appreciate it in their own individual ways. In the present set up, a creative response to poetry appears to be sorely lacking. Instead of poems, the present system believes in turning them into bundles and then labeling them. It can happen to scientific writing, or prose, but such a treatment with poetic creation is highly uncreative and unjust, because it kills the spirit of the poem and revels in the values which exist outside it.

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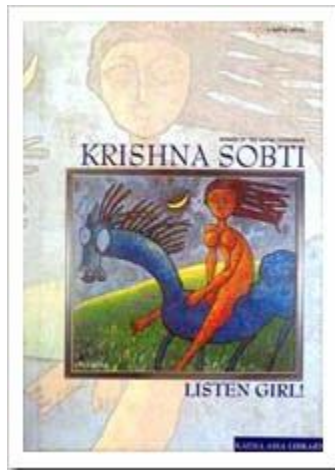
## The Bliss of Life in Sobti's Fiction

Dr. Ashok Verma

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Enchanting World!

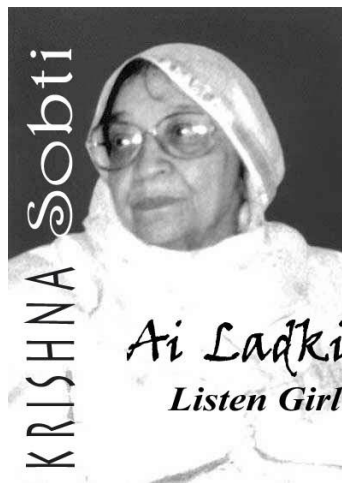


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“Ladki, this world is absolutely enchanting! ... the games of this world are unique. Magical!” (LG 54) These lines from *Listen Girl!* form the essence of Sobti’s views on life. In fact, Sobti’s characters show a strong penchant for life and therefore take active part in the games of life. The way the veteran author projects various facets of life in their essential beauty and charm, helps the reader view the offerings of this world from a different, refreshing perspective. The beautiful, picturesque world of nature, the flora and fauna, the cycle of creation, human relationships, pulsating humanity with festivals and rituals – all such phenomena fill the writer with sheer joy and leave her enthralled.



### **Fascination with This World**

In fact, all Sobti’s works stand testimony to her fascination with this world as the characters go on celebrating their worldly existence and exhibit an intense desire to enjoy these pleasures and joys of life with their five senses. In one novel after another, Sobti goes on to project this theme as if she, like her characters, were to draw energy out of the well of life to her heart’s fill. She is simply overwhelmed by the myriad games of life and thus wishes to participate actively in them.

### **Worldly Life versus After Life**

Sobti’s views on worldly life give a fresh fillip to the eternal debate as to what kind of life man should lead in this world. Should he believe in the Present and suck the

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marrow of life or he should utilize this life for a better, promising afterlife, i.e., the life after death. Since times immemorial, man has always found himself caught in this dilemma. The instinct goads him to live life as it comes to him; without caring for future whereas social and religious institutions which are inextricably linked to power, tell him to be more concerned with the future. This dilemma is further aggravated by the significant role played by religion in the life of a common man. Be it Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism or any other religious sect – all talk about an afterlife, although there are radical differences in the definition, implication and mode of “afterlife”. The term “reincarnation” is derived from Latin, literally meaning, “entering the flesh again” thus emphasizing the continuity of the soul as against the flesh that perishes.

### **Hindu Thought and Interpretation**

In Indian context, the significance of soul and rebirth forms the very basis of philosophical and religious thought in Hinduism pertaining to human life. *The Bhagavadgita* talks extensively about the soul and afterlife. The famous *shloka*, verse 22 from Chapter 2 in particular, highlights the immutability of soul:

*Vaasaansi jirnaani yathaa vihaaya navaani grrihnaati nara aparaani*

*Tathaa shariiraani vihaaya jir naanyanyaani sanyaati navaani dehii.*

(The Bhagavadgita)

In its English translation, the *shloka* mean thus: “Just as a man discards his old clothes and wears new ones, the soul discards the old body and takes on a new one.” In fact, the Hindu way of life centres around the basic idea that the soul never dies; it is indestructible. On the other hand, the body, made of five elements, namely, earth, sky, water, fire and air, is bound to perish. The body is considered to be merely a shell as against the soul which is believed to be immutable and takes on different lives in a cycle of birth, death and re-birth based on karma. The end of this cycle is called *moksha* or salvation – the ultimate goal of man.

It is further believed that the rebirth on this earth is directly affected by the kind of life one leads in this world – the kind of *karma* or the deeds one performs in this life. The *karma* are the accumulated sum of good and/or bad deeds. According to the Hindu belief, the soul leaves the body and reincarnates itself according to *karma* performed by one in the last birth. The social station (caste, etc.) as well as the gender bestowed upon the individual soul based upon acts performed in the previous birth is an important factor here. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that man should do such *karma* in this mortal life as would take him towards overcoming the possibilities and effects of rebirth and attaining a higher social station which could result ultimately in salvation or liberation of the soul.

Almost all religions of the world show allegiance to the theory of salvation, though with some radical differences between the beliefs. It is natural then that all these religious traditions should lay stress on using this life for the accumulation of good acts so as to reap the harvest in the afterlife. In this sense, this life becomes secondary; only a means to attain a fortunate rebirth without any intrinsic worth of its own.

### **Worldly Life Worth Living on its Own**

However, there has been an equally strong undercurrent which gives this worldly life due importance. There have been thinkers in the world in different ages who believe that worldly life is worth living on its own. According to them, it has a sanctity and independence of its own. It has got its own charm and value. As such, it must not be connected to and wasted for an imagined life after death. One must have inclination towards the joys, pleasures and colours which this world offers in plenty. The followers of this principle see human life as bliss and enjoy it. They celebrate their worldly existence and spread a message of happiness, mirth and fulfillment. They clearly advise man to live life king size, enjoy every moment of the present.

Charvak, a great Indian philosopher who propounded one of the six *darshana* or systems of Indian thought, also emphasizes the core idea of enjoying life as it is today:

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*Yavat jeevet sukham jeevet;  
Rinam kritva ghritam pivet:  
Bhasmi bhutasya dehasya  
Puinara gamanam kutah?*

Translated into English, the *shloka* means: As long as you live, live happily. Borrow money and drink *ghee* for the body will be consigned to flames once the soul leaves it. Who knows if there is a reincarnation or transmigration of the soul!

Thus, Charvak's message is pretty simple but clear. Man should make his present happy and comfortable. Putting aside all concerns for the future, he should enjoy life (even though one may question whether borrowing money and drinking *ghee* would really lead to happiness!). Almost similar kind of approach to life has been put forward by the Epicureans who advise people to "eat, drink and be merry."

### **If Life has Pleasures, it has Many Pains Too!**

One particular objection to this kind of philosophy is that it projects a narrow and limited perspective focusing on just the brighter side of life. Life is never a cake's walk. If it has pleasures, it has many pains too. As such, one cannot simply go on borrowing money and drinking *ghee*. The rosy aspect of life is transient. Moreover, we cannot altogether lose sight of our future which is the direct outcome of our present. We have to plan our future otherwise we might land in a pool of troubles, sooner or later.

Life is not all about merry-making; it demands discipline and seriousness which apparently is missing in the followers of this school. The fact remains that there are always two sides of the coin and therefore a balance, a synthesis has to be struck in life without which it is incomplete. This philosophy thus, it is alleged, is tilted towards the worldly joys and merry-making in life.

## **Humanism**

Here it is pertinent to mention the philosophy of Humanism which shows a primary or overriding concern with the needs and abilities of human beings. Its morality is based upon human nature and human experience. It values human life, human beings and their ability to enjoy life. In the words of Beckson and Ganz, *Humanism* refers to “the philosophy which emphasizes the achievement of an admirable human life on earth rather than the preparation for a blissful life hereafter” (85). Fuller, in his *A History of Philosophy* terms it a kind of “pre-occupation with the development of human self-realization here and now, in this world, within the limits set by birth and death” (244). As a typical anthropocentric phenomenon, humanism regards man as the central fact of the universe and interprets everything in terms of man and his values. It seeks to dignify and ennoble man. It regards him as the “crown of creation” Hence humanism involves concern with human needs, human desires, and human experiences first and foremost. Often, it also translates into giving human beings a special place in the universe on account of their abilities and faculties.

## **Humanism vis-à-vis Other Schools of Thought**

Humanism vehemently rejects Divine-dependent view which negates human life in this world and considers it a period of preparation for a better life after death. Again, humanism is against all types of scientism which take the naturalistic methodology of science so as to deny genuine importance or, at times, even reality to human feelings, experiences, and values. Humanism is not opposed to naturalistic explanations of life and the universe. On the contrary, humanists see it as the only viable means of developing knowledge of the world. What humanism strongly opposes are the dehumanizing and depersonalizing tendencies of modern science. One such face of scientism can be overtly seen in the doctrines of utilitarianism in the 19th century well projected in the caricaturistic portrayals of Thomas Gradgrind and Josiah Bounderby in Charles Dickens’ *Hard Times*.



Just as the humanists, the materialists also give this life due importance. According to the materialists, the only thing that exists is matter; that all things are composed of material and all phenomena including consciousness are the result of material interactions. In other words, matter is the only substance. Materialism denies the existence of both deities and soul. It is therefore incompatible with most of the religions of the world. Nevertheless, it provides a valid interpretation of this world which appeals to persons believing in the present.

### **Sobti Favors Humanism**

When one reads Sobti's fiction, one realizes at the very outset that the veteran Hindi author obviously favours the humanist stance. She might not be a follower of Epicurus or Charvak immersed completely in merry-making but she is definitely of the opinion that this life is beautiful and worth enjoying. She, in her works, seems to assert that human life is bliss and one has to enjoy it to the full. Once gone from the world, one cannot return to taste the fruits of this mortal world. While reposing deep faith in the Indian philosophy of *karma* and rebirth, she interprets it in her own way to give the present life the place it so richly deserves.

### **The Storyteller Ammu's Emphasis on This World Life**

One must remember the next life, but at the same time must not forget the mortal world. Sobti outright rejects the idea of sacrificing the present life for the imaginary *Baikunth Dhaam* (heaven). Ammu, the old woman of *Listen Girl!*, openly gives vent to the author's strong disapproval of the popular theory which terms this life worthless. The old woman best exemplifies the author's philosophy and in her character both worlds seem to blend perfectly. Surely, there is emphasis on the next world but not at the cost of the present one.

While talking to her daughter, Ammu reiterates the author's viewpoint only: "Who has seen the *Baikunth Dhaam* with his own eyes? Places of pilgrimage for the

living are here, in this world. Nowhere else” (LG 104). Sobti here seems to aver that both the worlds have their own respective importance and human beings should strive for a synthesis between the two worlds. In this way, she does not part ways with tradition while advocating for this human life at the same time.

### **The Light Will Keep Burning**

Deeply rooted in the Indian social and cultural milieu, Sobti does not shy away from her understanding of the Indian way of living and the philosophy of *karma* as propagated in *The Bhagvadgita*. She shows due respect to this viewpoint by expressing her strong belief in the immutability of soul through her mother’s oft-repeated words: “the light will keep burning.” Further, the author describes the ambience of her mother’s room after her death: “And in her room back at home, an earthen lamp burnt day and night, steadily, as if saying that the body perishes, not the soul. For the soul has neither birth nor death” (“On Writing *Listen Girl!*” 7).

### **Belief in Consonance with *Bhagvatgita***

Such remarks show the author’s firm belief in the existence of the soul. Old Ammu of *Listen Girl!* talks at length about the soul which is in consonance with the philosophy of *The Bhagvatgita*: “This body is a mere garment. Wear it and you’re in this world. Take it off and you’re in another world, away from your own!” (LG 21) These lines run parallel to the *shloka* in *The Bhagvatgita* quoted in the beginning of this chapter wherein the transmigration of soul from one body to the other is compared to changing to clothes. Again, Ammu shows faith in the concept of *moksha* while talking to herself on her deathbed:

All waters pull to the rivers  
All rivers to the ocean  
So life towards liberation  
Mukti! (LG 52)

## **Parting with Tradition**

However, worldly life always enchants the old woman. This is where she parts with tradition. She cannot accept that the present life is an illusion and hence has no real, intrinsic worth. She considers the issue in all earnestness and comes to the conclusion that this life is not worth wasting for the sake of the next life. She would love to live this mortal life in totality. According to her, this life has got its own beauty, charm, vivacity and worth; and as such, it should be given due importance. In one novel after the other, Sobti brings out this feature to the fore. The old Ammu becomes the most powerful representative of this perspective who presents the author's views more forcefully and convincingly than any other of her characters.

On her death bed, the woman has all praises for the worldly life as she shares her thoughts with her unnamed daughter and Susan, the nurse: "Ladki, this is not maya or an illusion. No, no. Life and living are not imagined. It is the leaving of it that is. Is there anyone of flesh and blood who can savour juicy mangoes, ripened on the trees, after his death" (LG 54)?

Hence it is obvious that Ammu, as also the author, is in favour of all that belongs to this mortal world. Sobti's celebration of human existence can be analysed under the broad categories of celebration of the self, joy of worldly existence, deep sense of appreciation for the tastes of the five senses, joy of inter-personal relationships etc. as this categorization would be useful in presenting the broad spectrum of the author's celebration of life.

## **Sobti Celebrates This World through Her Characters**

Sobti, through her characters like Ammu, displays a strong penchant for the worldly pleasures the almighty has showered upon human beings and which they enjoy with their five senses. Be it the seasonal fruit, tasty dishes or a simple, routine drink like tea, she simply relishes the taste of such things. Chewing dry currants she exclaims thus:

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“The last fruit of the season, child. This is joy indeed, sheer joy” (31). This penchant for worldly tastes actually comes naturally to many of Sobti’s characters. Kripanarayan, the male protagonist of *The Heart has Its Reasons* too exhibits the same tendency for the sweets and fruit of Delhi when he records in his red register: “Jamun, Shahtut, phirni, chat-pakodi, bedmi kachauri, rabri khurchan. Ahh! Ghantewala’s pista-lauj” (220).

All these things, when tasted, make the person marvel at the gifts of the Almighty. However the real sense of marvel and wonder for such tastes is noticed in Sobti’s comment in *Zindaginama* when she describes *hukaah* – the Indian smoke pipe – poetically: “With every inhale, the aroma wafts in and the smoke released. O God, your gifts! You’ve bestowed many a *shai* upon the sons of Adam!” (ZN 101)

### **Celebration of the Ambience**

Apart from the joys of tastes, sights and sounds, Sobti’s characters celebrate their surroundings and ambience. To them, this world is beautiful and charming and has so much to offer to us. The natural surroundings also enchant the author immensely and she simply marvels at the creation of such a myriad world by the almighty. Wind, Water, landscapes, rivers, trees, grass and the flora and fauna are live examples of the creative powers God possesses and the author bows to Him in sheer reverence and a sort of thanksgiving. Sobti is thankful to God for having created such a beautiful world and having enabled human beings to relish it in all its colours and shades.



In *Zindaginama*, the writer pays homage to the almighty in the following words: “O God! It’s You who made possible the day and night. It’s You who created this entire Cosmos.” (26) Again, natural beauty of the world in the following onomatopoeic description of heavy rains is wonderful: “The water channels of Rains here, there, everywhere! The hissing rains with dark clouds overcast like the battalions of victors! The clouds thundering threateningly like legions of army! The lightning flashing frequently as if swords!” (ZN 106)

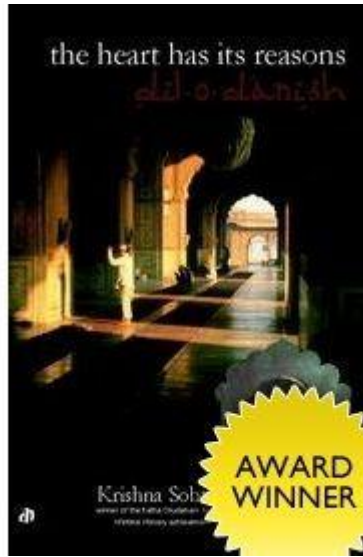
In this way, the world of nature along with its sights and sounds; flora and fauna, remains an integral part of celebration of the joys of life for Sobti’s characters and they are able to strike a harmonious relationship with it. This harmony enables them to respond to natural sights and sounds and gives them inner peace which sees them through all difficulties. They are able to attain that blissful state from where they identify their individual selves to the whole cosmos.

**All Good Wishes to the World**

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In the novel *The Heart Has its Reasons* also, Sobti's strong penchant for the celebration of one's surroundings gets reflected in Kripanarayan – the male protagonist who on his death bed, in an Ammu-like manner, is able to appreciate his surroundings and ambience. As the reader proceeds with the story of the novel one page after another, the distinct image of Dilli as it was in 1920s, begins to take shape. Farashkhana, Char Burzi Haveli, Jama Masjid, Chandni Chowk, Ghantewala's sweets, Ras Bihari's paan – there are numerous signboards for the reader to fathom even the minute details of the area she describes. This in fact is another characteristic feature of the author's celebration of life. The characters, from their joyful experiences of life, derive a sense of inner satisfaction and contentment which allows them to offer all good wishes to the world. They thus are in perfect harmony with their individual self as well as the whole world. Vakil Kripanarayan's showering blessings upon Dilli and later on the entire world supports this argument:

May God grant that Dilli may never become barren and desolate; may she always reign supreme, her wonders and brilliance intact. May the loving gaze of her myriad inhabitants continue to roam her streets...

May the world, a garden, bloom forever with colour..." (ibid)

## **Hindu Salvation – Individual Self Merging with the Universal Self**

Obviously, such words of praise and good wishes can be uttered by a person who after a rich experience of the worldly life has come to attain a state of contentment where he simply cannot harbour any ill will for anyone. In fact, it is state where the individual self becomes one with the universal self. They are comfortable with themselves and as a result are comfortable with the world. They celebrate themselves and thus, are in a position to celebrate the whole gamut of life.

### **Walt Whitman and Sobti**

Such a state which comes so naturally to Sobti's characters, is closely reminiscent of Walt Whitman's concept of the self. Walt Whitman too seems to celebrate the unified self which has universal relevance. There are many critics who have found a duality in Whitman's concept of the self. This duality, according to them, gets reflected in the conflict between the body and the spirit; the individual and the universal. However, a closer scrutiny of Whitman's concept of the self reveals that beneath this apparent duality, there is underlying oneness. He takes the self to such a level where the parts represent the whole and the whole cannot exist without the parts. It, in fact, is the parts that constitute the whole. V. K. Chari, an important critic on Whitman, while drawing similarities between Whitman's self and Indian mysticism, brings out the unified, monistic nature of Whitman's self. He maintains that it is the organizing principle of Whitman's poetry (62). Whitman in fact visualizes the opposites as essential components of the holistic self. To him, the self is the true meaning and centre of all existence, and that reality is not different from the self.

Sobti also seems to join hands with the American poet to assert the unified, holistic self. It is this realization that makes characters like Ammu, Kripanarayan and many others become so practical and matter-of-fact. They have attained a state of complacency and as such, can understand the patterns of life in a better way.

Ammu, in an almost effortless manner, displays the wholesome attitude towards life. Having lived her life through myriad experiences, she has derived the real substance, the kernel of life, it seems. She has reached a stage where from she can see things clearly, in their essence. She has enjoyed the worldly pleasures to her heart's fill and as such she is in a position to shower her blessings on the world. It however does not mean that her celebration of life is over. She would like to be completely immersed in the play of life till her last breath as she believes that human life is a 'stage' which even gods pine for. Sobti creates wonderful word images to capture Ammu's rapture:

He [her husband] is feeding honey to the child on his lap. Sometimes drops of grape juice. Sometimes he touches the child's lips with a pomegranate seed with such absorption as if there is nothing in this world beyond this play of life. (54)

### **Sobti's Celebration of All Facets of Human Life**

Obviously, in creating such characters as Ammu, the author herself is somewhat involved in celebrating all facets of human life. The life of the 'bipeds' i.e. the human beings thus becomes a fertile topic to talk on and this is exactly what Ammu does. She paints its enormity vividly. Beginning from the process of creation, she successfully creates wonderful word images which leave the reader completely engrossed in the games of life and refresh his views about life.

Be it the process of reproduction, childbearing, childhood or any other aspect of life, Ammu is for it. To her, it is the process of creation rather than mere reproduction which smacks of a mechanical process. She has great respect for motherhood and describes it with an artistic touch. This is something sacred, pure and sacrosanct.



## **Focus on Motherhood**

The following lines reiterate Sobti's deep sense of respect and marvel for motherhood: "Ladki, making a baby is like performing a yajna. During those days, a woman draws energy from the whole cosmos to recharge herself. She feels that special kind of existence that is hers. She watches the skies within her, even as she creates life, becoming one with nature, its textures and rhythms" (55-56).

This description of motherhood is strikingly in contrast with that of Simone de Beauvoir who describes womanhood, in somewhat derogatory terms, focuses on highlighting the problems faced by women. Beauvoir's self-denying, matter-of-fact tone is easily discernible in her assertion that woman is a womb. Here it may be argued that whatever Beauvoir says is valid in view of the plight of womenfolk in a male-dominated world and that she uses such a direct expression in order to rip off the veneer of sophistication and veneration the male world wears towards women.

## **Possibility of Feminist Objection**

The feminists might point out that Sobti's characters have unwittingly internalized the image of woman as propagated by the patriarchs and thus are not aware of their rights. At the same time, however, one must not forget that the same Ammu severely indicts the patriarchal system for its drawbacks. In this way, she adopts a practical stance on the issue. She is not in favour of woman shedding her feminine characteristics and virtues and aspiring to become like man. Woman should recognize her femininity and take pride in it rather than considering it as a burden. What Ammu seems to highlight here is the marvelous, universal fact that only a woman has been endowed with the capacity to give birth to a child. Instead of taking it to be a liability, woman should be proud that she has been given such an important role in the process of reproduction.

## The Other Side

Sobti's description appeals to our hearts who gives a poetic description of the process of creation and the roles played by the male and the female in this process. This is something which makes Sobti so special and her interpretation genuine and acceptable. Rohini Aggarwal rightly comments: "Unlike the modern female protagonists of contemporary feminist writers, the woman characters in Sobti do not take motherhood a burden or confine" (37). To them, motherhood is a *yajna*. Be it Ratti, Ammu or Mehak or even Mitro—they all hold motherhood in high esteem and feel blessed in their motherly instincts.

Sobti has all praises for the *janani*—the mother who gives life but at the same time she does not deprive the father of his significant role in the process. The male complements the process by providing the sperm to the egg. She compares the male to a musk deer blessed with the "musk of life". However Sobti beautifully associates this concept of musk deer to the life itself and thus turns the transient into intransient raising the process of reproduction from physical plane to aesthetic heights:

It [man as musk deer] spreads its perfume through this transient world and flits away instantly.

The woman holds this fleeting deer for a few moments and becomes a creator.

This is the play of creation. From her starts the cycle of generations ... an unbroken chain of progeny. (55)

## Man-Woman

Falling back on popular Indian myths, Sobti defines man and woman in the light of popular beliefs of the ancient times. She considers the Sun the storehouse of all male energy whereas a woman is like mother earth that receives the energy and creates life out

of it. At another place, Ammu takes pride in belonging to the sacred tradition of creating life and not taking away life.

Similarly, the childhood activities—the first innocent smile, the first ever step taken by a child, its first words uttered in a lisping manner— are a permanent source of joy for Sobti's characters, mothers in particular. Such worldly visions as the following one are a treat to watch: “When for the first time, new earrings are put in the ears of a daughter, she looks very pretty. A tagadi around the little son's waist looks still prettier. And the first innocent smile on the lips of a child is very charming. To see with one's own eyes the first steps of tiny feet is the prize of life, ladki” (LG 54). The novel *Zindaginama* again is fraught with such references wherein children with their innocent, playful activities please the elders beyond measures.

### **Refreshing Approach**

What makes Sobti different from other writers is her refreshing approach towards life which allows her characters pull out strength and energy from the well of life. It is this energy which later on sees them through all problems of life. They emerge as strong characters who boldly face the challenges and are able to take the bull by the horns. Thus Sobti's characters are seen celebrating their worldly life and existence in full spirit. Sometimes this celebration appears to be superficial and short-lived but the basic principle they follow in life is perhaps respecting life under all circumstances. It is their honesty towards their own selves, their sucking-the-marrow attitude, their indomitable spirit, faith in the essential goodness of man that enable them to struggle and survive through all ordeals of life. This attitude makes them comfortable not only with themselves but with the entire cosmos. It further gives them a sense of inner contentment; as such they remain unaffected by the outer turmoil. They thus celebrate their self in a Whitman-like manner and are automatically at harmony with the world.

## A True Humanist

The author also emerges as a true humanist for whom preservation of humanistic ideals is first and foremost principle of life. Human life is bliss, a joyous state and one must enjoy it. On the issue of Sobti's approach to life, one may agree with Nirupama Dutt who has all praises for the famous Hindi novelist and says that all novels of Krishna Sobti are "milestones which mark a remarkable journey which seems to converge to the centre point of *Zindaginama*, a saga of love, life and strife told with a truly great flourish."

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# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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## A Study of Elementary School Thai English Teachers' Perceived English Proficiency and Self-Reported English Teaching Efficacy

Masters Dissertation, Payap University  
Chiang Mai, Thailand

Barbara Best, M.A. TESOL

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

English as a global language has grown exponentially. It has become the modern day "lingua franca." It is the basis of communication in countries all over the world. In southeast Asia a new community—ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)—is becoming stronger each day. It is comprised of 10 countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The chief aim of this collaboration of countries is to promote "economic growth, social progress, cultural development in the region through joint endeavors in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations" (ASEAN.org, n.d.). As a community working together they are stronger than as individual nations. And in 2015, the ASEAN economic community (AEC) will be officially integrated in southeast Asia. Since the 10 countries represent many languages, one language, English, was chosen for business communication. Thus, speaking and using English in daily communications has become more important to many Thais.

International business and transactions, science and technology, international academic communities and education also use English as the primary language, which, in turn, requires proficiency in English (Crystal, 2003). And English, used mainly for business, education, and technology, is generally used in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and other tourist destinations (Chamcharatsri, 2013). In order to be competitive globally, Thailand realizes the need to produce citizens who are competent in more than one language (ONEC, 1999). In this country there are over sixty three million citizens who will help Thailand be a part of the global age (BIC, 2005). To achieve this, teachers need to help prepare students in all subjects, including English. The students need to become proficient, or competent, in the areas outlined in the national curriculum (ONEC, 1999). Proficient English teachers are also needed to teach English as a foreign language to the fourteen and a half million students of Thailand (BIC, 2007). They are expected to teach students how to use foreign languages in a more communicative manner and to have a good attitude toward the people and its culture. Language proficiency is needed to communicate and be understood by using the language for

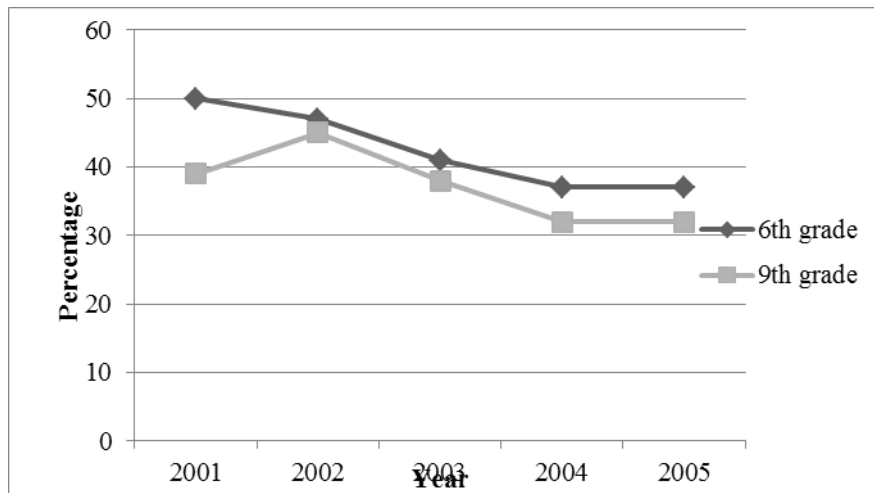
exchange of information, sharing interpersonal relationships, etc. In general, knowledge of a second language helps a person experience a more expanded view of the world beyond the immediate community. Language proficiency is now viewed as more than grammatical knowledge and a more communicative language teaching approach is the present course of action as described by the Basic Core Curriculum of Thailand (2008). As stated in the core curriculum (ONEC, 2007), a foreign language is required at all grade levels. The standards call for an understanding and mastery of the four macro skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and an ability to communicate in a foreign language. English is the standard foreign language taught in schools in Thailand. Understanding of the similarities and differences between the English language and culture and Thai culture and having the ability to communicate this information are core tenets of the Act. The standard practice of using English as a foreign language (EFL) for studying other subjects such as math and science, yet developing a broader world view of other cultures cannot be realized if students are not given the proper opportunities to learn the language. At present, Thailand does not require language teachers to pass any proficiency tests so there is no standard by which teachers are held accountable.

Research suggests that many Thai English teachers, as well as citizens, have a low level of English proficiency (Wiriyachitra, 2002; Punthumasen, 2007; Kijchalong, 2007; EF, 2013). Their inability to communicate in English is a problem, which has adverse effects on students' ability to learn to communicate in English. In fact, only approximately 20% of the English teachers in Thailand have a degree in the field of English language education (Punthumasen, 2007). In the area of teacher development, the purpose of the original 1999 National Education Act (ONEC, 1999) was to provide training in language teaching and teaching methodologies so that teachers could develop professionally (Wiriyachitra, 2002).

The problem of having enough proficient English teachers' stills exists today in Thailand. A recent test given to English-language teachers, administered by the Office of Basic Education Commission showed poor results (Kijchalong, 2007). Of the 14,189 teachers who took the exam only 10% scored over 60%. The exam tested teachers on their listening, reading, writing, and speaking abilities.



Thai students have not received adequate instruction in English, which is reflected in achievement scores as seen in Figure 1. The Secretary General Khunying Kasama Varavarn reported in 2007 that scores have continued to fall since 2005. The reduced classroom hours of English instruction was given as the reason for the decline (ibid.).



**Figure English achievement scores of 6th and 9th grade Thai students from 2001-2005**

Similarly poor test results have been observed in students. Test scores (2012 data) for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam, by ranking of ASEAN countries (Brunei scores not reported) ranks Thailand at the seventh position out of nine (Test scores, 2012). English scores from the Thailand O-NET (Ordinary National Education Test) for primary level, to grade 6, for 2010 were dismal, with only 9% of the students making 50% or better, with the average score being 32% (Kaewmala, 2012). Average student English scores for 2011 dropped even lower to 21% (ibid.). Most recently, the Education First Organization (EF, 2013), which is considered the largest English proficiency ranking organization in the world, ranked Thailand English proficiency at 55 out of 60 countries in their annual report, the English Proficiency Index. Data for this report comes from results of a free online proficiency test that is offered by the organization.

Serious consideration is being given to the proper training of English teachers in Thailand. The 1999 National Education Act of Thailand (ONEC, 1999) has called for a more communicative-based approach to the delivery of English (foreign language instruction), which is an aspect of the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008), with an emphasis on improving oral skills of Thai students, but after ten years of implementation this has not been

successful. Teachers still need training in communicative language teaching (CLT) and extensive training in improving their English proficiency levels before the country will likely see an improvement in the proficiency levels of its students. They need additional training in CLT because the standard practice of teaching a foreign language in Thailand relies on teaching grammar and using rote memorization to learn another language. Most English classes are taught in Thai with limited oral practice (Punthumasen, 2007). Many Thai teachers also do not have training in language instruction. To further compound the issue, at present, local governments still decide how or whether to include English instruction into their curriculum. Consequently, some schools do not teach English as outlined by the Education Act.

To become proficient in a language, practice has to take place. This is where teachers play an important role. Without proficient English teachers to teach, learning is impeded (Anderson, Greene and Loewen, cited in Henson, 2001). The language proficiency of the teachers affects their teaching efficacy which, in turn, affects the achievements of the students and their self-efficacy beliefs to English (ibid.). Briefly, teaching efficacy is the confidence a teacher has in their ability to promote learning in students. Eslami and Fatahi (2008) reveal several studies (Grossman, Reynolds, Ringstaff and Sykes, 1985; Hollow, Anderson and Roth, 1991; Johnson, 1992) that have shown compelling findings of the effect of teachers' beliefs, in many different contexts, on students response to the teaching itself. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998), also add support to this idea that teachers' beliefs about their abilities influence their teaching practices, which in turn can affect student learning.

There have been many studies on self-efficacy starting with a study by the RAND Corporation (Armor, 1976), followed by Bandura (1977) and then becoming more focused on teaching efficacy (Gibson and Dembo, 1984; Ashton and Webb, 1986; Tschannen Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) but only a small amount of research has been done with the focus on language proficiency levels and teaching efficacy of non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST). In 2004, a study by Butler revealed a gap between primary English teachers, from Korea, Japan and Taiwan, self-reported English proficiency levels and minimum levels of proficiency that they believed were necessary for teaching English. Government officials had asked the teachers to begin focusing on oral communication skills but there were some

questions about the English teachers' confidence in their own communicative language ability and their English teaching skills (Butler, 2004).

Chacón (2005) took this aforementioned research a step further and explored Venezuelan middle school EFL teachers' perceived efficacy and found that their perceived efficacy correlated with their self-reported English proficiency. She also found supportive research that states that “teachers' actions and behaviors are tied to their beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and motivation levels (ibid).” Some researchers have theorized that a belief can be more difficult to change the earlier it is integrated into a belief structure (Pajares, 1992; Bandura, 1993, 1997; cited in Chacón, 2005). Chacón found that:

"the higher the teachers' perceived efficacy in the language skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading), the higher their sense of efficacy to motivate students and to design instructional strategies. [...] it is important to note that EFL teachers' confidence about their capabilities to teach English affects their perceived efficacy to bring about student change. Lack of competency in English influences teachers' self-efficacy because in analyzing the teaching tasks, teachers will make judgments on their teaching competence to teach students speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English" (2005:269).

Chacon reasoned that when teachers rate their efficacy highly, they will most likely engage students in mastery experiences which, in turn, foster more communicative teaching strategies. She found that because many EFL teachers' communicative competence levels were low, they were not able to use CLT to teach English.

Eslami and Fatahi (2008) followed up with a study in Iran focusing on high school EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and the self-reported English proficiency levels. It also showed that, “a teacher's perceived efficacy was positively correlated with self-reported English proficiency (p.1).” The higher a teachers sense of efficacy the higher their English proficiency. They saw a positive correlation between teachers' efficacy and their use of CLT. Teachers with a lower sense of teaching efficacy tended to use a grammatical teaching orientation.

Elementary Korean teachers were studied by Lee (2009) for English teaching efficacy in relation to attitudes and English proficiency. She found that English proficiency levels affected teaching efficacy, and consequently confidence levels in teaching English.

It is important that the teachers are proficient in the language at a professional level, and that they have confidence in their English language abilities. Elementary Thai English teachers have the added responsibility of being the first foreign language teachers most students are exposed to. For these reasons, the researcher feels it is important to get a snapshot of these teachers' English abilities. Little research has been completed in Thailand in the TESOL field.

Prior studies have used self-reporting teaching efficacy scales based on prior works by Bandura (1997), Gibson and Dembo (1984), and Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998). This research project used the English-modified Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) as the basis of the teaching efficacy scale for this study, similar to the one used in the Chacón and Eslami and Fatahi studies. The Butler (2004) modified FLOSEM (Stanford Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix; Padilla, Sung, and Aninao, 1997) was chosen to assess teachers' self-reported English proficiency levels.

Proficiency levels have been found to affect a person's sense of efficacy. It is important that elementary school Thai English teachers have good English proficiency, which fosters more confidence in teaching the language. It has been correlated to their English teaching efficacy beliefs (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk, 2001). They believe when teachers have a high sense of teaching efficacy, they are more apt to teach in a more communicative style, which, in turn, positively affects student achievement. Students' self-efficacy beliefs are bolstered by the high efficacy levels of their teachers. Thus, when students have a higher sense of self-efficacy, they are more likely to believe they can learn English. Student achievement is essential to mastering the language.

To date, and to the researcher's knowledge, there have not been any studies in Thailand that address teachers' self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate the self-perceived English

proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers, and to determine if there was a correlation between the two.

## 1.2 Research Questions

This study aimed to quantify elementary school (known as prathom level or grades 1-6 in Thailand) Thai English teachers' perceptions of their level of proficiency in English as well as their self-assessed teaching efficacy in English.

1. What are the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers, in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills?
2. What are the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers?
3. Is there a correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy levels?

## 1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To investigate the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
2. To investigate the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers.
3. To determine if there is a correlation between self-reported English proficiency and English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers.

## 1.4 Scope of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived English proficiency and English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers, from northern and central Thailand, through a self-assessment instrument with the objective to determine if there was a correlation between English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. The aim was to study factors that could have an effect on teaching efficacy. This study did not

examine the actual proficiency and teaching efficacy of the participants but relied on their assessment. The tool for measuring the self-reported English proficiency was created and used by Butler (2004). It was as an adaption of the FLOSEM by Padilla and co-workers (1997). The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), using questions from both the short- and long-form scale, assessed the participants' English teaching efficacy. Data were gathered from 33 elementary school Thai English teachers in the north and central part of Thailand from 2011-2013.

## 1.5 Definition of terms

**Self-perceived English proficiency level:** The level of proficiency in this study refers to the self-rated proficiency of the elementary school Thai English teachers and their level of competency in the use of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English. In this study, the macro skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing were appraised through a self-assessment survey instrument. Language proficiency was determined by teachers' responses to statements that relate to the self-perceived proficiency scale starting at (1) beginner-limited ability to (6) native-like ability. An overall proficiency level was determined from the mean average of scores in the macro skills as reported by each participant. The Butler (2004) instrument, based on the Stanford Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM; Padilla, Sung, and Aninao, 1997), was used in this study.

**Self-reported English teaching efficacy level:** English teaching efficacy is defined here as an elementary school Thai English teacher's self-perception (self-reported) about their capabilities to teach and motivate students to learn English. The degree to which teachers believe they can affect change corresponds to the English teaching efficacy level. The model survey instrument used in this study adapted the TSES, by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). The scale was divided into three subscales: student engagement, use of instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy. The subscale of personal teaching efficacy was added by the researcher. The verbiage was modified to reflect English teaching efficacy, similar to the instruments used in the Chacon (2004) and Eslami & Fatahi (2008) studies.

**Elementary school Thai English teacher:** The teachers represented in this study are typically female (85% of the sample) and teach elementary-level English to Thai students. In Thailand this level is also known as prathom, which are grades 1-6 in Thai public schools.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

This study looks at elementary school Thai teachers' teaching efficacy in an EFL environment through subscales of: student engagement (SE), instructional strategies (IS), and personal teaching efficacy (PTE) in Thai EFL settings to get a better picture of what these teachers believe their English teaching efficacy to be. It also investigates teaching efficacy in relation to language proficiency and other related factors from the perspective of elementary school Thai English teachers.

1. By examining elementary school Thai English teachers' perceived English proficiency and English teaching efficacy, this study can offer more information about Thai teachers teaching efficacy in the EFL field. It can provide a more detailed look at elementary school Thai English teachers' sense of teaching efficacy in relation to other factors such as English proficiency, degree major, years of teaching experience, etc. This information can be of benefit to different interest groups.

2. This study can give a voice to the teachers and addresses the issue of Thai English teachers' sense of proficiency and teaching efficacy in the EFL setting. When it is known how elementary school Thai English teachers perceive their English proficiency and teaching efficacy, better developmental programs and courses can be implemented to improve their teaching of English, thus increasing students' proficiency in English.

3. The students of Thailand will benefit when more teachers understand teaching efficacy and how it relates to student learning. "Teachers with higher levels of efficacy are more likely to learn and use innovative strategies for teaching [. . .] and design instruction that develops students' self-perceptions of their academic skills (Silverman and Davis, 2009)." Teachers with higher English teaching efficacy produce students with higher self-efficacy about learning English. Thailand and ASEAN benefit when students become more proficient in English.



4. School administrators and the Ministry of Education officials will be able see how English teachers respond to this survey research. By assessing the results, professional development programs could be geared toward improving English proficiency and teaching efficacy. Teachers need strong support at the school level, as well as the governmental level, to effectively teach; gaining more support is crucial to teachers' efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy, 2000).

5. Teacher education programs could profit from this information. Understanding the relationship between language proficiency and teacher efficacy could influence how some courses are taught. In essence, this information could provide the impetus to improve curriculum design.

6. Creating an awareness about the gap between the English teachers' language proficiency, their abilities to teach English, and actual teaching outcomes or student proficiency is an important consideration in Thailand education system today. Results of this study could be a springboard for better teaching pedagogy. When teachers are better able to deliver more effective EFL instruction, Thailand will produce students with higher EFL proficiency. This can help make Thailand more competitive in the global market in addition to ASEAN.



# Chapter 2

## Literature Review

### Introduction

Literature relevant to the use of English as a global language, language proficiency, self-efficacy and teaching efficacy are reviewed in this chapter. The theoretical framework relating to language proficiency and teaching efficacy, including related studies, as well as rationale for the methodology are discussed.

### 2.1 Role of English as a global language

English is the language used worldwide for international communication and business. As a result more and more people are learning the language. In fact, over one billion people are said to speak the language as their native, second, or foreign language, for many only at a basic level (Thirumalai, 2002). Access to information about other cultures in the world has become more convenient through the World Wide Web. It has been a driving force in the spread of English being used as an international language. English is used as the common language on this global platform with over 565 million (English language) users ("Internet Users in the World," 2011). Popular websites like google, facebook, you tube, and wikipedia are English-based and some of the most visited sites by users, based on information gathered from Alexa.com ("Topsites," 2013). In Thailand, there are 17 million internet users accessing websites ("Internet Usage in Thailand," 2014). Many use English to understand the content and communicate with people all over the world. More young people than ever are exposed to various forms of English every day. They are also being exposed to the cultures that go with the language. Within the past five years public schools in Thailand have been equipped with computer rooms that have computers that are connected to the internet (ibid.). There is now a greater need for these young people to be proficient in English so that they can participate in the online community as well as the ASEAN community.

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*Snapshot of Elementary School Thai English Teachers' Perceived English Proficiency and Self-Reported English Teaching Efficacy* – Masters Dissertation, Payap University, Thailand

To help these young people in Thailand be more proficient in English, there is also a greater need for more proficient English teachers. Language proficiency of Thai English teachers is a hotly debated topic. People wonder why Thai students, after having 12 years of English instruction, graduate without actually being able to communicate in English with more than a simple, "Hi, how are you?" To understand this, taking a look at Thai culture may help.

Foley (2005) talks about intercultural communicative competence and how the key concepts of Buddhism guide teachers and learners approaches to learning any subject. Briefly, concepts like karma, hierarchical status, *bunghun*, or "the benefit and benevolence rendered to someone" (ibid, p.228), which is the duty of a teacher to provide knowledge as well as wisdom to all students, and *krengjai*, or respectfully not wanting to cause discomfort. *Krengjai* is what makes Thai students not want to cause conflict or confrontation, and therefore, not want to ask a teacher to repeat something when they do not understand. The learning of English is tied to Thai culture in ways not always seen by the foreign eye. Besides teaching culture associated with English speakers, Thai teachers also need to understand and respect their native culture while teaching English as a foreign language. Thai culture is changing more rapidly than ever because students, now more than ever, are being influenced by the world wide web and peering outside their culture to discover new ways of communicating with the world.

## **2.2 Language Proficiency**

There have been many views on the concept of language proficiency. It has been defined as the ability to communicate in a language through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It includes both knowledge and practice of the language (TEQSA, 2013). Language proficiency has also been defined as "the ability to use language in real world situations in a spontaneous interaction and non-rehearsed context and in a manner acceptable and appropriate to native speakers of the language. Proficiency demonstrates what a language user is able to do" (ACTFL, 2012:4).

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Additionally, Canale and Swain (1980) have defined language proficiency as "communicative competence," with "linguistic competence" being an intrinsic part of the concept (Iyldyz, 2007). Richards, Platt, and Platt (cited in Griffiths, 2003) asserted that proficiency is the level of skill that a person uses to convey a language. De Avila (1997), with a focus on education, states that:

"language proficiency consists of both receptive and productive skills, input and output, information sent and received. It is made up of both oral and literacy skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Proficiency in each of the four domains is viewed as a necessary element to language proficiency, as it contributes to academic success in the specific sense" (p. 2).

Stern (cited in Ilurda, 2000) used 'proficiency,' 'competence,' and 'knowledge of the language' interchangeably and used many different concepts of proficiency, which included mastery of language form (including cognitive, linguistic sociocultural, and affective domains); the ability to use language creatively as a communication tool with less focus on form. His definition is "the actual performance of given individual learners or groups of learners" (ibid, p.341).

Communicative competence is the root of language proficiency. A teacher's communicative competence or ability is affected by their proficiency level in their L2 (second language). And this, in turn, affects their ability to teach English effectively (Lee 2002, cited in Butler, 2004). Initially, communicative competence was coined by Dell Hymes (as cited in Brown, 1994) in response to Chomsky's (1965, *ibid.*) view of competence and performance. Hymes felt Chomsky's theory was limited to knowledge of grammar with performance being a separate component. It offered no connection to the appropriateness of the communication. Hymes felt communicative competence should also include the social meaning associated with the communication. He brought a sociolinguistic perspective to Chomsky's work (Bagaric, 2007). Besides understanding the language, an L2 speaker should be able to use it appropriately in relation to the situation. From this foundation came more research in the field.

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Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) went on to define communicative competence in the area of L2 learning (Yano, 2003). They described four types of communicative competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse (the last was added by Canale in 1983). Grammatical competence encompasses “knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology” (Canale and Swain, 1980:29). Sociolinguistic competence requires an understanding of the context in which the communication takes place. Strategic competence relates to the ability to use compensation strategies to make up for breakdowns in communication. Discourse competence deals with the ability to form comprehensible and coherent utterances and being able to manipulate the language to fulfill other communication goals such as reading or writing (Brown, 1994). Canale and Swain were the first researchers to give a better-rounded, multifaceted model of the communicative aspect of language proficiency.

Cummins (1979) has focused on bilingual speakers and L2 proficiency. He has defined two types of language proficiency in the context of English teaching. Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) are acquired by L2 learners in approximately two years. Learners are able to use the language for oral communication in a relatively short period of time, yet take longer to acquire cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Learning to speak and use a new language in an academic environment is significantly different than learning BICS and takes longer, 5-7 years, to become proficient because factors such as more difficult academic language, absence of non-verbal clues, reading and writing demands, etc. tend to be a hindrance in an academic learning situation (“BICS, CALP, AND CUP,” n.d.). Learning the theory behind the utterances of the language is harder to grasp and consequently takes longer to master skills such as reading and writing.

The term "communicative language ability" (Bachman, 1990) is also a good descriptor for language proficiency and offers a "broader view of language proficiency" (p.4). Llorca (2000) has taken the term communicative language ability and further subdivided it into language proficiency and communicative proficiency. He calls for "the adoption of

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'proficiency' as a middle term between 'competence' and 'performance', a term that may include the notion of 'ability'" (p. 93). By combining two different concepts, (linguistic) *competence* (Chomskyan view) and *communicative language ability* (with subcategories of language proficiency and communicative proficiency), Llurda proposes a broader, multifaceted definition of language proficiency as a solution and way of clearing confusion over the term.

There have also been other contributions to the communicative competence theory by several other researchers, (Widdowson, Savignon, Bachman, Stern, cited in Ohno, 2002) each adding to or defining different facets of the aforementioned models. Language proficiency means more than just being able to understand the linguistics behind the language or being able to speak it. It also encompasses having the ability to use the language in many different contexts and domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Of which these are taught to learners by parents, caretakers, and/or teachers.

Generally, teachers are concerned about their level of language proficiency and understand its importance (Norris, 1999). They usually know that a teacher's proficiency has been correlated to students' learning outcomes (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; Butler, 2004; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) so there is good reason to be concerned. For students to become more proficient, language acquisition has to occur. Learning a language is different from learning science or math. As such, teachers recognize that knowledge of content is not enough. Language teaching requires the ability to communicate in the language through the use of communication skills. Taken one step farther, "second language education is fundamentally different from other content areas in that it does not constitute a body of content per se, but rather involves the learning or teaching of a vehicle for communicating content" (Tedick and Walker, cited in Norris, 1999).

If teachers have low English language proficiency, they tend to shy away from a communicative style of teaching and opt for a more teacher-centered classroom that relies on more grammar instruction than speaking and listening instruction (Lee, cited in Butler, 2004; Chacon, 2005). Language proficiency is also believed to affect a teacher's self-confidence

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(Eslami and Fatahi, 2008). Lange (cited in Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) said it is a determinant to the amount of English use in the classroom, as well as being a crucial characteristic of a good language teacher.

In this study, language proficiency is considered in the L2 context. Language proficiency is defined by the researcher as the level of competency a person has in the use of a language; it is an intertwining of the ability to use the language, as well as knowledge of the language, or communicative competency. The macro skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing, comprise aspects of language proficiency. Since all four skills are used in the teaching of English in Thailand, they were the focus and basis of assessing proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers. Competency is considered "the knowledge that enables one to produce and comprehend a language" as defined in the American Heritage Dictionary (2009). This definition is the result of culling of terms discussed by many researchers (Chomsky, 1965; Hymes, 1970; Taylor, 1988; Canale and Swain, 1980 and Canale, 1983; Cummins, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Stern, 1983) as discussed in the research of Llorca (2000).

What level of English proficiency should elementary school English teachers in Thailand have? That is a big question that needs answering. When there are standards to meet teachers will rise to the standard. Teachers' proficiency levels in Thailand, overall, vary greatly because there is no standard to meet. There are no EFL teacher assessment matrices used in Thailand. During teacher training, prospective teachers have to take and pass a proficiency test during their second year; that is all that is required. To become an elementary school teacher in Thailand, the elementary education program requirements include only a two-credit course in English teaching methods and a choice of taking two major electives out of five: Thai, English, social studies, math, and science. Each major area includes 15 credits of specific training. For additional elective choices, there are only six credits offered in English training. This means that there is the possibility that a future elementary teacher has only taken two English course credits. Elementary teachers in Thailand teach many subjects during the day. Some schools have specific English teachers, but many schools do not, leaving the English teaching to teachers not specifically trained in language teaching.

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Consequently, teachers' language proficiency levels may not be good enough to teach their students. How will the Ministry of Education of Thailand deal with this situation? Will a language proficiency scale be adopted to evaluate Thai English teachers in the near future?

Considering the proficiency scale used in this study and the core tenets of the foreign language curriculum of Thailand, what is an acceptable level? The Butler/FLOSEM (2004) assessment uses a scale starting at (1) beginner-limited ability to (6) native-like ability. In Thailand, it is unreasonable to expect teachers to be native-like or even at an advanced level of proficiency considering the training they receive. It may seem unreasonable to even suggest an intermediate proficiency level (3-4 on the Butler scale) across the four domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing; a level that would be appropriate to meet the curriculum guidelines to grade 6 (BIC, 2008). The Thailand basic core curriculum (2008) outlines that grade 6 level students are expected to: understand and act on verbal and written instructions and "communicate about themselves, their families, schools, and environment, foods, beverages, free time and recreation, health and welfare, selling and buying, and climate with vocabulary of around 1050-1200 words" (p. 255). A discussion by the Ministry of Education on the minimum level required to teach EFL would be a starting point, which needs to be started immediately if it has not already been done. The adoption of a language assessment tool is needed.

Assessing language proficiency of teachers is done in many countries around the world. It has been done through proficiency frameworks such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which is an oral communication test for language teachers; the European Common Framework for Reference for Languages, used by language learners as well as teachers, who use it as a standard of reference for proficiency levels, curriculum guidelines, syllabus development, textbooks, etc.; and Canadian Academic English Language Assessment, a Canadian assessment generally given to students entering universities (Wikipedia, n.d).

There are also many well-known English language proficiency tests: IELTS (International English Language Test System), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign

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Language), and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) that are used for assessing language abilities and often required for entrance to schools and international businesses.

In summary, language proficiency, as discussed above, is an important factor to consider for Thai English teachers. The level of proficiency elementary school English teachers need has not yet been established. They may need to have an intermediate level of proficiency to be able to effectively teach English according to the core curriculum. This study used a self-reporting, self-perceived proficiency scale as a convenient and reliable way to assess teachers' proficiency levels (LeBlanc and Painchaud, 1985; Mistar, 2011). Different language assessment frameworks and standardized language proficiency tests were discussed to create awareness about ways to assess language proficiency.

### **2.3 Self efficacy**

Language proficiency is considered "a factor related to EFL teachers feeling of self efficacy" (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008). In addition to language proficiency, self efficacy beliefs about L2 also play a significant role in how an L2 speaker uses the language. Efficacy beliefs are subject specific, thus a person may have high efficacy beliefs related to their cooking ability, while also having low efficacy beliefs about their swimming abilities.

Self-efficacy is an aspect of a person's language competence. It is at the center of Bandura's (1977, 1997) Social Learning (Cognition) Theory. It is based on the belief that people learn in a social context and are influenced by their environment. Much of a young person's learning takes place in the classroom, where they learn by observation or modeling from a teacher. He states that it is "the belief in one's capabilities to recognize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" or a person's belief of their capabilities to complete tasks (Bandura, cited in Van Wagner, 2009). It takes the view of human agency, in that people are agents engrossed in their own growth and they can take action to make things happen. Through self-reflection, a major aspect of social cognitive theory, people can make sense of their world by exploring their beliefs, evaluating them and



consequently changing their thinking and behaviors (Pajares, 2002). A person's concept of self-efficacy, in different domains, tends to grow and evolve throughout one's life. If one believes they are not good at something or that they will not succeed at something, it may have a negative impact on how they go about or accomplish those tasks or goals. A person with a strong sense of self-efficacy in a particular area or domain will "do what it takes" to master the goal or task set before them. Someone with a poor sense of self-efficacy will tend to avoid taking risks and may focus on their failings instead of their accomplishments and lose confidence in their abilities. In essence, self-efficacy beliefs help shape the outcomes one expects and how much effort they will put into an endeavor.

Bandura (1977, 1997) also realized the multidimensional aspect of self-efficacy and the dynamic interplay between one's behavior, personal factors such as mood or stress level, and their environment. Pajares (2002) describes Bandura's conception as reciprocal determinism: determined by behavior, environmental factors and personal factors, such as cognitive, affective, and biological events. These interactions result in a triadic reciprocity. This can and has been related to teaching in that "teachers can work to improve their students' emotional states and to correct their faulty self-beliefs and habits of thinking (personal factors), improve their academic skills and self-regulatory practices (behavior), and alter the school and classroom structures that may work to undermine student success (environmental factors) (ibid.:1)." Schools can also have a positive impact by helping to, "develop a collective belief about the capability of their students to learn, of their teachers to teach and otherwise enhance the lives of their students, and of their administrators and policymakers to create environments conducive to these tasks (ibid.:3)." Academic learning is influenced by one's environment and their beliefs of efficacy in a particular area.

There are four sources where individuals form their self-efficacy beliefs as defined from the psychological perspective of Bandura. They are: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977). Briefly, mastery experience is a positive belief that is the result of past performances of tasks that resulted in success; vicarious experience refers to observing others successfully model skills, to gain a sense of confidence in doing a similar task themselves; verbal persuasion is provided by

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others to give feedback or support to a person; while emotional arousal is generally related to stressful and threatening situations that arouse fear and thus, inhibit performance. Although Bandura used psychological experiments involving threatening situations, examples can be seen from a more positive perspective. When people have early success accomplishing a task (mastery experience) such as learning something new, they are more likely to do it again and have a more positive attitude about it than if they were not successful. Mastery experiences can be enhanced by watching others successfully complete the task (vicarious experience), thus gaining confidence in their own perception of their ability to accomplish the same task. As an example, when seeing role models, be it at the familial, governmental, or academic level, model the use English on a daily basis, more students are more likely to try to learn English too. When learning the language, encouragement and praise (verbal persuasion) can go a long way in boosting a person's confidence. Yet, when students experience stress or fear (emotional arousal), anxiety levels usually increase and can inhibit learning. When emotional arousal is reduced by learning coping skills such as learning strategies, there is more of a chance of mastery in a quicker time. When the emotional arousal is positive in nature, such as experiencing success in communicating in the new language, anxiety can be reduced, thus increasing the chance of mastery experiences in learning the language.

Just as a person's self-efficacy beliefs influence their beliefs about how good they may be at accomplishing certain tasks, the same can be said of teachers and their beliefs about their teaching abilities. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about their teaching abilities are increased when they have more knowledge about teaching, which can affect how they relate to students. Teachers who have high levels of teaching efficacy will persevere in their attempt to reach students; they want their students to have mastery experiences because they know student achievement is enhanced. These mastery experiences are just as crucial to students as they are to teachers. Teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of their teaching abilities are the core of teaching efficacy.

## **2.4 Teaching efficacy**

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It could be that a lack of mastery experiences have had adverse effects on Thai English teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy beliefs toward teaching English. Because some have not had positive or successful experiences in teaching English, these failures have lowered their sense of English teaching efficacy. It could be that by watching others model an appropriate teaching style such as CLT through what Bandura calls vicarious experience, and being supported by verbal persuasion as teachers learn a more communicative style of language teaching, their fear and anxiety levels can be reduced, thereby making them feel more confident of their language teaching abilities. Their mastery experiences in teaching English could very likely increase. By being more confident in their abilities, they would more likely be able to impart that confidence in language learning to their students. Consequently, Thai English teachers would be in a better position to achieve the goals of the 1999 National Education Act (ONEC, 1999).

Lee Schulman's (1986) influential work on teacher knowledge has provided the foundation for defining the basis of teacher knowledge. He focuses on content knowledge in teaching. This is the amount of knowledge a teacher holds in a certain subject area. He refers to Schwab's (1978, as cited in Schulman, 1986) definition, "to think properly about content knowledge requires going beyond knowledge of the facts or concepts of a domain. It requires understanding the structures of the subject matter". Schulman states that, "The teacher need not only understand that something is so; the teacher must further understand why it is so" (1986:9). Pedagogical and curricular knowledge are included under the content knowledge umbrella. Pedagogical knowledge is the understanding of the concepts and curricular knowledge is the vehicle in which these concepts and knowledge is delivered.

Teachers may have the content knowledge of the English language, but sometimes lack the confidence to deliver that knowledge in a form that will promote communicative competence in their students. The ability to teach a language is different from teaching other subjects such as math, reading, sciences, etc. To become competent, one needs to use the language to communicate orally, as well as having the ability to comprehend what is being said. Teachers need to have confidence in their speaking ability to effectively teach a language. A teacher's efficacy beliefs "can potentially influence both the kind of environment

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that they create as well as the various instructional practices introduced in the classroom" (Bandura, cited in Eslami and Fatahi, 2008).

The concept of teacher efficacy has its origins in a study published by RAND Corporation researchers in 1976 (Armor, cited in Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy, 1998). This study included a questionnaire that had two items added to it just before publishing. Those two items had their theoretical base in a study by Rotter (1966; *ibid.*) and his idea of locus of control in social learning theory. These items stated below had a great impact on the theoretical concept of teacher efficacy

Item 1: *"When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment."*

Item 2: *"If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students."* (p.4)

Gibson and Dembo (1984), filling a need for a more exact questionnaire created a survey that incorporated the two items of the RAND study and Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy. They showed how the RAND study and Bandura's work correlate on outcome expectancies and self-efficacy dimensions. They assigned the term general teaching efficacy (GTE) to Item 1 of the RAND study. It assesses outcome expectancies as defined by Bandura and is an externally driven construct. Item 2 assesses self-efficacy which is labeled as personal teaching efficacy (PTE). Being of a more personal nature that is controllable by the teacher, it is considered an internal construct. Gibson and Dembo developed additional items and created the Teacher Efficacy Scale (1984). They believed that efficacy judgments were contextually based and should be measured that way (Henson, 2001). This scale became the standard in the field and was used by many researchers in their studies for many years.

A study by Kubanyiova (2006) showed that, "insecurity in one's English proficiency is a substantial part of [...] the teachers' lack of teaching efficacy" (p.10). Studies have correlated a teacher's language proficiency level to their ability to teach English effectively

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(Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; Kamhi-Stein and Mahboob, Soodak and Podell, cited in Eslami and Fatahi, 2008). Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) proposed an integrated model of teacher efficacy. They reviewed the history of teacher efficacy from its beginnings in the RAND study (cited in Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy, 1998), with the work of Rotter (cited in Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy, 1998) and his social learning theory as the theoretical framework, and the work of Bandura (1977) and his social cognition theory; both as psychological frames of reference. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) say the former study showed that a “teachers' sense of efficacy had a strong positive effect not only on student performance but on the percent of project goals achieved, on the amount of teacher change, and on the continued use of project methods and materials after the project ended” (p. 3-4). The two items of interest in the RAND study reflects PTE, or a teacher's personal belief about their teaching ability, and GTE, the belief that the motivation and learning of students was the responsibility of the students; it was not a consequence of their own teaching. The result of this research demonstrated the impact of efficacy on student achievement (ibid.).

Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) have proposed an integrated model of teacher efficacy that combines the conceptual framework of the Rand research and Bandura's work as well as suggesting new areas of research. They see teacher efficacy as context-specific because teachers have differing levels of teaching efficacy depending on the teaching situation. A teacher may be highly efficacious teaching math or Thai but have a low sense of teaching efficacy when teaching English. They used Bandura's four categories of experience or sources of efficacy in their model while also focusing on analysis of the teaching task and assessment of personal teaching competence.

The analysis of the teaching task is similar to GTE in that it deals with the teacher's ability to cope with the circumstances of the given situation. The assessment of personal teaching competence is associated with PTE. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy agree with Bandura (cited in Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy, 1998) that self-efficacy is specific to a particular task. They also concur that it, “has to do with self-perceptions of competence rather than actual level of competence” (ibid, p.7). They believe

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the interaction of all these components shapes teacher efficacy. “Greater efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence, which leads to better performance, which in turn leads to greater efficacy” (ibid.:22). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) created a Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale that has subsequently been used by many researchers. It has been modified to be used in EFL/ESL settings also.

Teachers will be more likely to have a higher sense of teacher efficacy when they have opportunities to participate in teacher training programs that give teachers more learning opportunities in the communicative approach to teaching and pedagogic principles concentrating on learner-centeredness, because they will be more prepared for the challenges of teaching and more specifically teaching English. As teachers learn new strategies for English teaching their overall teaching will improve and, in turn, student achievement will improve (Guskey, 1988).

## **2.5 Self-reported teaching efficacy**

The use of self-report assessments in teaching efficacy scales is convenient and allows busy teachers to complete assessment surveys at a time that is favorable for them. Self-assessment tools have been shown to be reliable and give consistent and uniform results (LeBlanc & Painchaud, 1985; Mistar, 2011). It has been used as a tool in classrooms where students rate themselves and their learning with good success. Mistar (2011) found a positive correlation between self-assessed scores for language proficiency and actual test results. There has also been research that has refuted the reliability of self-assessment saying among other things that the respondent may try to please the teacher/other by marking themselves higher than they may be (Cohen, cited in Mistar, 2011). All in all, there has been more positive reports of positive correlation than not (ibid.). The use of a self-assessment tool in this study was a fast and reliable way to investigate teachers' self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy.

The self-reporting Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) was used in this study. It measured the extent to which teachers believe they can affect learning in students. The scale was modified to reflect English teaching

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efficacy beliefs with subscales of student engagement, instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy.

## **2.6 Related research**

Three studies formed the basis of this study. Butler (2004), Chacon (2005), and Eslami and Fatahi (2008) studied nonnative EFL teachers to learn more about their proficiency levels (Butler, 2004, Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) and self-efficacy beliefs (Chacon, 2005, Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) since these factors have been shown to affect teachers teaching abilities.

Butler (2004) asked elementary teachers in the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, and Japan to evaluate their English proficiency and to rate what they thought were minimum proficiency levels for English teachers. She expanded the Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM) by Padilla, Sung, and Aninao (1997) to include the reading and writing domains. The self-reported data that was gathered showed that most teachers thought their proficiency levels were lower than what is needed to actually teach English. They reported that they felt less proficient in oral skills, which was not unexpected, even though it is known that most Asian countries focus on grammar skills more than speaking skills. The results were of concern because if teachers did not think their proficiency levels were acceptable; their teaching quality could affect students learning, motivation, and success at learning to speak English.

Teachers' perceived teaching efficacy was correlated to perceived English proficiency levels in the Chacon (2005) and Eslami and Fatahi (2008) studies. Chacon focused on middle-school teachers in Venezuela and Eslami and Fatahi sampled non-native English high school teachers in Iran. Both studies used an English-modified Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The wording was changed to reflect experiences in an EFL classroom. "School work" was replaced with "English" and "English" was added to several items. The efficacy scale was subdivided into student engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies. Both studies also found

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that teaching efficacy beliefs were affected by language proficiency levels; and when teachers rated themselves with a high efficacy rating, they were more likely to use communicative language teaching (CLT).

As stated, Eslami and Fatahi (2008) investigated English proficiency levels and efficacy beliefs of EFL teachers in Iran. They used the teaching efficacy scale of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and a proficiency scale similar to Butler (2004). They found positive correlations between the teachers' self-assessed proficiency levels and perceived self-efficacy beliefs. Teachers who rated themselves highly in speaking, listening, and writing proficiency also reported that they were more efficacious in their use of instructional strategies. There was also a significant correlation found between the teaching efficacy subscales--student engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies--and the application of CLT strategies. This suggested that the more efficacious a teacher felt the less prone they were to use a grammar-oriented approach, in favor of a more communicative teaching style. Teachers believed they were more efficacious when they perceived their proficiency levels as high.

## **2.7 English teaching in the Thai context**

Scores for TOEFL examinations, which reflect English proficiency levels, show that Thailand lags behind many other countries in ASEAN. Of the nine ASEAN nations listed (Brunei had no statistics), Thailand ranked eighth (Prapphal, 2002). The Education First Organization (2013) also ranked Thailand 55 out of 60 countries for English proficiency levels. Even though English is taught for 12 years, there seems to be a problem with students' ability to learn the language.

The English language basic education core curriculum of Thailand recognizes that elementary education is "one of the most important foundations for children to gain a better standard of living and welfare once they become adults" (Nomnian, 2013, p. 584). Foley (2005) believes that English proficiency is an essential aspect of Thai students learning. There are four tenets of the basic core curriculum (BIC, 2008) for language learning. It

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professes: language for communication, or the use of the macro skills to exchange information, express feelings, and being able to have interpersonal relationships; language and culture, or learning about the cultural similarities and differences to Thai culture; language relationship to other learning, use of foreign languages for other subjects and expanding world views; and language and relationship with society and other global communities, or the use of a foreign language to connect with the world through further education and career options. These strands aim to promote higher English proficiency and a positive attitude toward English and better preparation for a more global citizenship (Nomnian, 2013).

Traditionally Thai language teaching has relied on grammar instruction and rote learning. Often the learning of vocabulary is not in context of a situation, it is disassociated from the communicative aspect of the language. Wiriyachitra (2002) states that Thai teachers do not like to teach listening and speaking skills. It has not prepared students for a more global world. Communicative language teaching, which was incorporated into the Thai curriculum in 1996 has not been fully embraced (Punthumasen, 2007). They still teach by the grammar-translation method. Often teachers teach English in Thai (Segovia and Hardison, 2009). In addition, students do not have chances to practice English with native speakers on a regular basis. There are many obstacles that inhibit the learning of English. Biyaem (cited in Wiriyachitra, 2002) and others say that heavy instruction schedules, inadequate resources and equipment, large class size, and poor language skills hinder teaching English (Punthumasen, 2007; Noom-ura, 2013). The lack of English qualifications among elementary school teachers is also seen as a problem (Baker, 2008). As mentioned earlier, the influence of Buddhism in the culture also has an impact on the way subjects are taught in Thailand.

In many Thai public schools there are no specialized English teachers as such. The elementary school teachers are often responsible for teaching several subjects: math, science, Thai, reading, Thai culture, etc. during their work day. The addition of teaching English can be seen as an extra burden. Teaching a language is different from teaching math or science, which does rely on rote learning of facts. Language acquisition requires more than rote learning, the language has to be practiced to gain full benefit. Young learners are also still

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learning their own language and its structure, much less focus goes to learning English because, many times the parents and community members do not speak English, thus, making it hard for them to practice.

The Thai National Education Act of 1999 called for more learner-centered methods along with a more communicative approach to learning EFL (Punthumasen, 2007). Unfortunately, these standards have not been implemented successfully (Graham, 2013). Using learner-centered methods continues to be a challenge for many teachers (Kimhachandra, 2010). In fact, teachers have expressed concerns about insufficient training, resources, and professional support as well as low proficiency levels (Segovia and Hardison, 2009). There have been few studies on the teaching English in Thai elementary schools. One study was found; Kuhasuwan (2006) focused on teaching vocabulary strategies to elementary level students. More effective learning strategies were used but teachers still promoted a traditional and passive style of learning. It was recommended that teachers become more of a facilitator to allow students to participate in more communicative activities among themselves.

## **2.8 Summary**

One's self-efficacy beliefs determines how much effort will be put forth, how long they will persevere, and how flexible they are in completing tasks. A teacher's self-efficacy beliefs about teaching, in turn, have an influence how they approach the teaching of a particular subject. Because research has shown that a teacher's self-efficacy has an effect on learning outcomes of students, it is important to assess teachers efficacy beliefs to know more about how they operate in the classroom. Since efficacy levels vary according to the subject area, looking at language teachers sense of efficacy in teaching a foreign or L2 may produce information that can be used for future teacher professional development programs. This chapter has examined the theoretical background behind language proficiency, self-efficacy, and teaching efficacy, which have been the foundation of limited research in the ESL field. Researchers in other countries that teach EFL have investigated and found a correlation between the two. This information highlights the need for more effective teaching and

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professional development programs to increase communicative competence among EFL teachers in Thailand.

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# Chapter 3

## Research Methodology

### Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods used in this quantitative study to better understand elementary school Thai English teachers' perception of their English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. The participants and instruments are described below.

### 3.1 Subjects

The subjects of this research came from a population of elementary school Thai teachers who teach English. A cross-sectional sample was taken of 33 elementary school Thai English teachers by convenience and snowball sampling methods (Mertler and Charles, 2008). Some of the sample was found at a TESOL conference, through teachers who went to the conference and to teachers who said they would distribute the surveys to other teachers in northern Thailand. Other participants came from an elementary school in central Thailand. Of the 33 who returned the survey, only 30 completed the language proficiency section, while all 33 completed the other sections of the instrument.

Elementary school Thai English teachers were chosen because they are most Thai students' first English teachers. It is important for these teachers to have a good command of the language (proficiency) and good teaching efficacy because they set the foundation for students' future language learning.

### 3.2 Research Instruments

#### 3.2.1 Survey instrument

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To answer the research questions, two self-reporting scales were used in this study. Also included in the survey instrument were questions to gather personal information from the participants.

The survey instrument used in this study included three sections. The first section was in the form of a questionnaire to gather demographic information about the participants. The second section was comprised of a self-perceived English proficiency scale to investigate teachers' perceived levels of proficiency in the four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The proficiency scale was used to answer research question one. The third section included an English teaching efficacy scale, known as the Teaching Efficacy Scale (TSES), by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). It was modified to assess English teaching efficacy specifically. The teaching efficacy scale was used to answer research question two.

The demographic information section was adapted from a National Education Association questionnaire (Bhutan, 2004). Typical questions requested information about gender, age, education level and education major. Open-ended questions included: name of school, province, major, courses taken related to English teaching methods, teaching theory, workshops taken that focused on English teaching, where the participant may have traveled abroad and how long, number of hours spent teaching English and other subjects, and any comments they may have wanted to share. The demographic information section was written in English and translated to Thai to make sure that it was clear and easy to understand for Thai teachers of all proficiency levels. The translation was completed by a professional translator (Thai national) and reevaluated and confirmed as an acceptable translation by another translator (Australian national). The actual questionnaire is shown in Appendix A.

The first research objective was to investigate the self-perceived English proficiency level of elementary school Thai English teachers. The instrument used to assess the teachers' proficiency levels was a self-perceived proficiency scale. It is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Self-perceived English proficiency scale**

Skill	Scale level	Statements
Listening	1	I can understand a limited number of high frequency words and a common conversational set of expressions such as, “How are you?” or “My name is...”
	1.5	Between 1 and 2
	2	I can understand simple questions and statements in short dialogues or passages if they are repeated at slower-than normal speed.
	2.5	Between 2 and 3
	3	I can understand the main point(s) of a short dialogue or passage if spoken at slower-than-normal speed. I may need some repetition.
	3.5	Between 3 and 4

Skill	Scale level	Statements
	4	I can understand most of what is said (all main points and most details) when the conversation is at a near normal speed
	4.5	Between 4 and 5
	5	I can understand nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition may be necessary.
	5.5	Between 5 and 6
	6	I can understand everything at normal speed like a native speaker.
	Speaking	1
1.5		Between 1 and 2

	2	I can participate in a simple conversation on familiar everyday topics at slower-than-normal speed. I must frequently pause during conversation.
	2.5	Between 2 and 3
	3	I can express myself using simple language but make mistakes and pause a lot when I try to express complex ideas.
	3.5	Between 3 and 4
	4	I can effortlessly express myself at near normal speed. Occasionally, I have to slow down when expressing complex ideas and less-common expressions.
	4.5	Between 4 and 5
	5	I am generally fluent, but occasionally have minor pauses when I search for the correct manner of expression.
	5.5	Between 5 and 6
	6	I have native-like fluency.
<hr/>		
Reading	1	I can recognize a limited number of high frequency written words and understand English signs used on the street.
	1.5	Between 1 and 2
	2	I can understand simple directions and statements in short passages if they are written in simple sentences.
	2.5	Between 2 and 3
	3	I can understand the main point(s) of a short passage written in ordinary English if I can have some assistance such as the use of a dictionary and a grammar book, although there are usually some parts that remain unclear to me.
	3.5	Between 3 and 4
	4	I can read and understand most of what is written in regular English texts, although depending on the genre of the texts, I may encounter some unclear words and may

need to consult a dictionary in order to comprehend the texts.

4.5 Between 4 and 5

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Scale level</b>	<b>Statements</b>
	5	I can read nearly everything with ease, although it is still slower for me to read in English than in Thai; I occasionally may encounter some unfamiliar words and expressions.
	5.5	Between 5 and 6
	6	I can read various kinds of English texts at a normal speed and with ease, just like I read in Thai.
Writing	1	I can spell a limited number of high frequency words and common phrases.
	1.5	Between 1 and 2
	2	I can write a short paragraph using simple sentences with basic structures, but I frequently make mistakes in grammar and vocabulary.
	2.5	Between 2 and 3
	3	I can write letters and short essays using relatively simple language. I can produce a few complex sentence constructions but with noticeable mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. I usually take a long time to write when I try to express complex ideas.
	3.5	Between 3 and 4
	4	I have enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to write English with relative ease; however, I occasionally make some noticeable mistakes in grammar and



	vocabulary.
4.5	Between 4 and 5
5	I can write English almost like a native speaker, but occasionally I may have minor unconventional uses of vocabulary and expressions.
5.5	Between 5 and 6
6	I can write in English just like I can write in Thai.

---

Note: This instrument is adapted from the Butler (2004) proficiency scale based on the Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM; Padilla, Sung, and Aninao, 1997).

The statements used to investigate the self-perceived English proficiency level of elementary school Thai English teachers, through the four domains of language skills, shown in Table 1, were written in English and translated to Thai for Thai teachers of all proficiency levels (see Appendix B).

Of the 33 surveys that were returned in the final study, 30 participants completed the proficiency scale, with 3 participants not completing this section of the instrument. A statistical program was used to calculate the internal consistency, or reliability, of this section of the survey. The Cronbach's alpha was .96, which demonstrated that the English proficiency scale was considered reliable.

For the first research objective, a self-perceived proficiency scale used by Butler (2004) and Lee (2009), and modeled after the FLOSEM by Padilla, Sung, and Aninao (1997) was used. It was chosen because it had been successfully used with Asian teachers from Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. The researcher believed it would work better than the CERF, Common European Reference Framework that is used in western countries. The original matrix included the following sections: listening comprehension, oral fluency (this was renamed speaking in the current study), vocabulary in speech, pronunciation, and grammar in speech. Butler (2004) expanded the FLOSEM beyond the oral skills of listening and oral fluency (speaking), by creating similar descriptors for reading and writing and including them. Each of the four sections, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, had six

descriptive statements, with a half number between each descriptor for teachers that felt they were between levels (Butler, 2004). Participants were asked to rate their abilities by circling one number (e.g., 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, etc.) in each section that best described their language proficiency level, as shown in Table 2.

The level of proficiency descriptors given by Butler were not given for each numbered statement but represent a continuum of proficiency from extremely limited ability to native-like proficiency similar to the original FLOSEM (as stated in Padilla & Sung, 1999), and shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 The level descriptors of self-perceived English proficiency for the four language domains**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Level descriptor</b>
<i>1</i>	<i>Extremely limited ability (Padilla &amp; Sung, 1999)</i>
1.5	Low beginner
2	Mid beginner
2.5	High beginner
<i>3</i>	<i>Low intermediate (Butler, 2004)</i>
3.5	Mid intermediate
<i>4</i>	<i>High intermediate (Butler, 2004)</i>
4.5	Low advanced
5	Mid advanced
5.5	High advanced
<i>6</i>	<i>Native-like proficiency (Padilla &amp; Sung, 1999)</i>

In Table 2, the italicized descriptors, level 1 and 6 were mentioned in the Padilla, Sung, and Aninao study, while level 3 corresponds to low intermediate proficiency and level 4 corresponds to high intermediate, as defined by Butler (2004). The proficiency scale was supplemented, by the current researcher, with descriptors generally used to define language proficiency and similar to the descriptors mentioned by Butler.

The second research objective was to investigate the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers. The instrument used to gather information to answer the research question is discussed below and shown in Table 3.

A self-reporting teaching efficacy scale (see Appendix C) was used to answer research question two. The scale was an English modified version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Questions from both the short- and long- form were used. Some of the questions were also used in the Chacon (2005), Eslami and Fatahi (2008), Lee (2009), and Mirsanjari, Karbalaci, and Afraz (2013) studies. The modification to English simply added the word "English" to some of the questions, as discussed in Chapter 2. Also, in question seven, the word capable was replaced with proficient to be more consistent. The scale was used in this study was divided into three subscales: student engagement, instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy. The questions that relate to each section are shown in Table 3.

The researcher chose to focus more on student engagement, instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy as they were more in line with the research on proficiency and teaching efficacy. The researcher added three new questions that specifically focused on personal teaching efficacy. The purpose of the questions was to get a sense of how confident the participants are about their English teaching abilities. When teachers are confident about their teaching abilities, they perceive themselves as skillful. They feel like competent teachers (Moore, 1952). The self-reported English teaching efficacy scale is shown in Table 3.

**Table 2 Self-reported teaching efficacy scale**

Items of Self-reported Teaching Efficacy	Scale								
	S o m e w h o a g r e e 								
	N o t h i n g V e r y l i t t l e Q u i t e a b i t A g r e e 								
<b>Student Engagement</b>									
1. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in learning English?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. How much can you do to make the English class enjoyable for all students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. How much can you do to make students believe that they can do well in English?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. How much can you do to make students appreciate the potential benefits associated with learning English?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. How much can you do to get students to turn in assignments or papers promptly?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13. How much can you do to influence student performance in English class?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15. How well can you get students to work together during English class?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

**Instructional Strategies**

Items of Self-reported Teaching Efficacy	Scale								
5. How much can you provide appropriate challenges for very proficient students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies in your English class?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when your students are confused?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12. How well can you implement alternative instructional strategies when a certain strategy does not work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Personal Teaching Efficacy</b>									
16. Overall, how confident are you in your English abilities to teach your current level(s) of students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
17. Overall, how confident are you of your English abilities to teach intermediate or upper-intermediate level students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
18. Overall, how confident are you in your abilities as a teacher teaching subjects in Thai.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

\* This is an English-modified version of the Teaching Efficacy Scale by Tschannen-Moran

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and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) with personal teaching efficacy statements added by the researcher.

A Likert scale was used for the evaluation of the efficacy rating. Number 1 represented the lowest rating level and had a descriptor of ‘nothing’ at all meaning that the respondent believed there was no chance of affecting student outcomes, 3 equated to ‘very little,’ 5 to ‘some influence,’ 7 to ‘quite a bit,’ and 9 meant that the efficacy for teaching English was high, or the teacher could affect ‘a great deal’ of influence in student outcomes. The English teaching efficacy scale was subdivided into statements that reflected efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, as well as personal teaching efficacy for teaching English and Thai. The subscales represented in Table 3 were categorized as such and used by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). The Chacon (2005) and Eslami and Fatahi (2008) studies also used some of the same questions in the same subcategories.

The third objective was to determine if there was a correlation between the self-reported English proficiency and English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers. The answer to this question was derived from the data gathered from research questions one and two. To interpret the data, correlative analysis was used for the two objectives (SPSS, 2008).

### **3.2.2 Observations**

Observation was also used to examine and corroborate the self-reported English proficiency and teaching efficacy results given by two teachers. Two brief, one hour each, observations were made during the study to confirm data entered on the survey instrument, the self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy scales, by the participants. After surveys were retrieved from the school, they were reviewed and a convenience sampling was used to determine candidates’ availability for observation. The researcher scheduled afternoon observations, on two different days, with two teachers, who responded positively to being interviewed. Because it was the end of the school year, the teachers had review lessons planned, in preparation for end of year exams. Field notes were taken during the observation gathered information about the class environment, seating arrangement, type of teacher-student interaction, lesson plan, student engagement,

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instructional strategies, and observed speaking proficiency and teaching efficacy. In addition to field notes the observer used the survey instrument's proficiency and teaching efficacy scales to rate the teachers. The results would be compared to the participants responses.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Data were collected, initially through a pilot study and then through the final study. Instruments were hand delivered to either the schools, respondents, and some surveys were delivered by a second party. More information is given in the following sections.

#### **3.3.1 Pilot Study**

Before distributing survey instruments, school directors were given a letter requesting permission to distribute the surveys (Appendix B) and each survey instrument had a cover letter (Appendix C) detailing the purpose of the research survey and a request to participate in the research. The survey was written in English, with a Thai translation, to make sure teachers could understand the verbiage of the instrument. A convenience sample was used for the pilot study. The bilingual survey was given to three schools in central Thailand. A government, private, and demonstration school participated. The surveys were distributed in February and March, 2010. The surveys, which included a good-quality pen as a thank you gift, were given to either the school director or department head with instructions given on how to complete the survey. The researcher requested to come back in two weeks to retrieve the surveys. It actually took three weeks or more to get the completed surveys back.

Eight surveys were given to the government school and six surveys were returned. All sections of the instrument were completed. At the private school, nine surveys were dropped off with the request of returning within a week to pick up completed surveys. A week later, the researcher was informed that not all surveys were completed yet. Another week was given to complete the surveys. In the third week after distribution, surveys were retrieved as completed. Several incorrectly completed (6) surveys were accepted without being able to return to the school, as it was not convenient to return because the school year was ending. The six incomplete surveys were missing responses to the English proficiency section. All

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other sections were complete. The demonstration school was given eight surveys. Of the eight surveys returned, six had incomplete or incorrectly completed sections. The researcher was able to return to the school to give specific instructions to the teachers who did not complete the surveys correctly. Of the surveys resubmitted (one teacher was not present to complete the survey), three were complete and acceptable. A total of twenty surveys were returned and analyzed for the pilot study. Of the twenty surveys returned, there were nine surveys with an incomplete or incorrectly completed English proficiency section. These nine surveys were still analyzed for the other two sections: English teaching efficacy and teacher demographic information.

The pilot test revealed problems with the wording of the English proficiency scale directions. Several respondents circled every number and half number in the section. Originally the directions were, "On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) rate your English abilities in the following areas. Circle one number in each section that best describes your English proficiency." The directions were not comprehensible to many participants. The instructions were then changed to, "Rate your English proficiency in the following areas. Circle **one** number in each section—Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing—that best describes your English proficiency" in the final study. The format and wording of the proficiency scale stayed the same (as seen in Table 1). Also some stilted Thai translations in various statements were revised to be better understood.

### **3.3.2 Final Study**

Snowball and convenience sampling techniques were used for the final study. Thirty-five surveys were handed out at the TESOL Conference in Bangkok in 2012. Each questionnaire included a stamped, addressed (to the researcher) envelope for easy return. They were given to either elementary school Thai English teachers or to department heads of two government universities in northern Thailand. The department heads that the researcher spoke with said that they would give them to teachers, whom they were in contact with, to complete. The researcher made an effort to review the instructions with the receivers of the surveys. Eight surveys were returned from one professor and six from the other professor. Seven other respondents at the TESOL Conference completed and returned surveys. Twenty-

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two surveys were returned over the next two months, with one uncompleted survey returned with a note apologizing for not participating. Four surveys were given to other teachers the researcher came in contact with (2011-2013) and eight to a government demonstration school in Bangkok (2013), with a privacy envelope included with those surveys. Each survey packet included either a nice pen, candy, two twenty baht notes, or a pencil/utility bag, with a pen included, as thank you gifts. Of the 48 surveys distributed, 34 were returned resulting in a 71% return rate. Three returned surveys did not have the proficiency section completed, but all other sections were complete. A sample of 30 was used for the proficiency scale results and a sample of 33 was used for the teaching efficacy scale. Surveys were tabulated using a statistical analysis program (SPSS, 2008).

### **3.4 Data analysis**

Statistical analysis was used for the analysis of the results. Demographic data made use of frequency statistics to get a clearer picture of the results. Research objective one, investigation of self-perceived English proficiency, used descriptive statistical analysis, as well as frequency statistics, to interpret the four domain results. An overall proficiency mean average was computed from the four domains. The second research objective, the self-reported English teaching efficacy investigation, also made use of frequency and mean average statistical analysis to report results. The mean average was also figured for each subscale of the teaching efficacy scale: SE, IS, and PTE. A Cronbach's alpha value was determined to establish internal reliability for research objectives one and two also, The third research objective, to determine whether there was a correlation between perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy, made use of correlation statistical analysis in the form of a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. One way variance, ANOVA, was used to report statistical significance between dependent and independent variables.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

The Cronbach's alpha quotient measures the internal consistency of the language and teaching abilities sections of the instrument (Lee, 2009). The four language proficiency

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statements had a Cronbach's alpha of .96, and for the 18 items in the English teaching efficacy part of the survey, the Cronbach's alpha was .91.

In summary, one survey instrument consisting of three sections (demographic information, self-perceived language proficiency scale, and self-reported teaching efficacy scale) was distributed to elementary school Thai English teachers. There was a 71% return rate, or 33 returned surveys, with all but 3 surveys completed correctly and completely. There were 30 completed language proficiency scales and 33 completed teaching efficacy scales.

# Chapter 4

## Results of the Study

### Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the survey instrument used to gather data related to the research questions of this study. The data were analyzed by quantitative and qualitative means. Initially the demographics of the elementary school Thai English teachers will be discussed followed by the perceived English proficiency level and self-reported English teaching efficacy data. Analysis of the data was by descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means, as well as correlative statistics and one-way ANOVA.

### 4.1 Demographics of Participants

The first section of the questionnaire asked for personal information in order to get a better picture of the respondents. Questions asked about: gender, age, education level, education major, English-related courses completed, travel abroad, teaching experience, hours spent teaching English, as well as general questions about teaching English. Question 1 asked at which school the respondent taught. That will not be reported here for confidentiality reasons. Table 4 gives data on gender, age, education level and major.

**Table 4 Demographic data for gender, age, education level and education major**

Background (n = 33)	Frequency	Percent
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#### Gender

Female	28	85
Male	5	15

#### Age (years)

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20-30	10	30
31-40	7	21
41-50	7	21
51+	9	27

#### **Education level**

Bachelor	18	55
Master	14	42
PhD	1	3

#### **Education Major**

English Major	19	58
Non-English major	14	42

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As shown in Table 4, the majority of participants are female (85%), as is the norm in elementary teaching. The age groups 20-25 and 26-30 were combined into one group (20-30), since there was only one respondent in the 20-25 group, making the group more closely matched the other groups: 31-40 and 41-50, which have a 10 year spread. Most age groups were fairly evenly spread. Of all the participants surveyed, 14 of the teachers hold a master degree and one participant holds a PhD degree. Four teachers have English-related masters degrees in Teaching English as a Second Language, English teaching, English, and Teaching English as an International Language with the others having degrees in English, English education, and business English. Degrees other than English mentioned were physical education, elementary education, kindergarten, sociology, educational research, and early childhood education.

Professional development is an important aspect of a teacher's academic life. It is important to continue to develop professionally and to continue improving English proficiency. Questions 5 and 6 asked participants whether they had taken any English teaching methods, learning (acquisition), or teaching theory courses, while question 7 asked

if participants had taken any English teaching related workshops. Results are shown in Table 5. The English-related courses listed by the respondents are shown in Table 6.

**Table 5 University courses related to English teaching**

<b>Related course type (n=33)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
English teaching methods	19	58
Language theory/teaching theory	21	64
English teaching workshops	29	88

As shown in Table 5, almost all of the participants have taken either courses related to English teaching methods, language teaching theory, or an English teaching workshop(s). Many have taken more than one type of course and most teachers (88%) have taken a workshop in English teaching. Only one participant, an English major, reported that she had not taken any of these courses or workshops. A vast majority of teachers have participated in professional development training. Table 6 shows the type of university courses or workshops related to English as listed by respondents. Not every respondent listed courses taken.

**Table 6 English-related courses and workshops taken by respondents**

<b>Course type</b>	<b>Course name</b>
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Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Curriculum and Instruction of Specific Subject -</li> <li>General Methods of Teaching</li> <li>-Assessment in English Teaching</li> <li>-Fundamental English</li> <li>-Evaluation</li> <li>-Teaching English as a Foreign Language</li> <li>Methodology</li> <li>-Material Development</li> <li>-Instructional Media</li> <li>-Testing and Evaluation</li> <li>-Listening and Speaking Reading and Writing</li> <li>-Educational Research Methodology</li> <li>-Principles of Teaching</li> <li>-Methods of Teaching English for Secondary Level</li> <li>-English for Beginners</li> </ul>
Language theory or teaching theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Theories and Methods of English Language Teaching</li> <li>-Learning theory</li> <li>-Introduction to Foreign Language Acquisition</li> <li>-Socio-Linguistics</li> <li>-Teaching English as a Foreign Language</li> </ul>

Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-English Teaching for Primary School</li> <li>-Funny English Teaching Techniques</li> <li>-Backward Design</li> <li>-Teaching Techniques</li> <li>-Phonics and Literacy</li> <li>-Creativity in the Classroom</li> <li>-TKT (Teacher Knowledge Test Preparation Course)</li> <li>-Teaching English in Learning Reform</li> <li>-(Helen Deron's) English Teaching Methodology</li> <li>-English for Young Learners</li> <li>-Teaching English as a Foreign Language</li> <li>-Techniques and Games</li> </ul>
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The courses or workshops taken are varied, as seen in Table 6. Teaching English in learning reform, techniques and games, teaching techniques, and creativity in the classroom are some examples.

For question 8, participants were asked about their travel to other countries. Travel abroad presents opportunities for exposure to different languages and cultural exchange. Table 7 shows the type of countries, English-speaking or EFL-speaking, and the amount of time respondents spent on trips abroad.

**Table 7 Travel abroad experience**

Type of travel	Frequency	Percent
<b>Travel abroad (n=33)</b>		
Yes	24	73
No	9	27
To at least one English-speaking country (as primary or official language)	10	42

To EFL countries only (primary language other than English)	13	58
<b>Countries visited (n=34)</b>		
English-speaking country (as spoken or official language)	8	24
English spoken as foreign language (primary language other than English)	26	76
<b>Duration of trips (trips listed: n=33)</b>		
<1 week	7	21
1-2 week	8	24
3-4 week	1	3
1-2 month	4	12
3-6 month	5	15
7-12 month	0	0
1 year +	1	3
N/A	7	21

---

Table 7 shows that 24 participants traveled abroad, as reported in question 8 of the questionnaire section of the survey. Of those 24 travelers, 10 traveled to 8 different English-speaking countries (New Zealand, Australia, Canada, USA, UK, Singapore, Hong Kong, India). Eight traveled to ASEAN countries (not shown on Table). Most traveled for two weeks or less.

As teachers become more experienced, they generally have more confidence in their teaching abilities. Question 9, which requested information from participants about teaching experience, is reported in Table 8.



**Table 8 Participants' teaching experience**

<b>Teaching experience (years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1-3	6	18
4-6	5	15
7-10	4	12
10-15	5	15
16+	13	40

Table 8 shows that many teachers (55%) have over 10 years of teaching experience. There is a small percentage of new teachers (18%) who have just entered the field with three years of less of teaching experience.

Question 10 asked participants about weekly English teaching hours, which is reported in Table 9.

**Table 9 Hours spent teaching English each week**

<b>English teaching time (hours/week)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<10	10	30
10-15	18	55
16-20	5	12

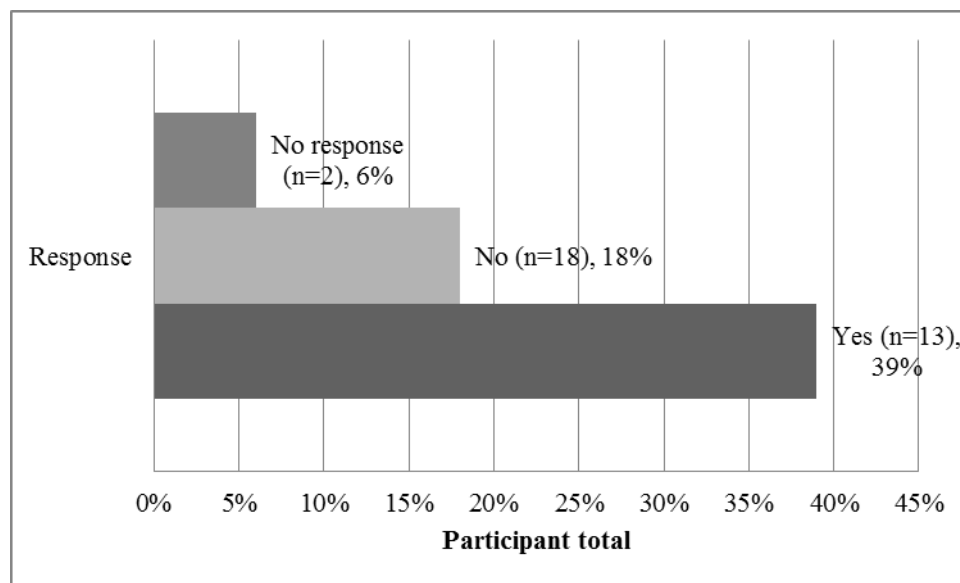
(n=33)

Over half (55%) of the teachers teach 10-15 hours a week with and 12% teach English 16-20 hours a week, as shown in Table 9. In addition to information on hours spent teaching English, question 11 asked about hours spent teaching in Thai. Since that was not deemed relevant to the study that question was not analyzed and information is not reported.

In the teacher questionnaire, there were also questions to gather information about how teachers rate the number of English teaching hours (Q12), adequacy of syllabus content (Q13), comfort level teaching English (Q14), additional training needs (Q15), and major

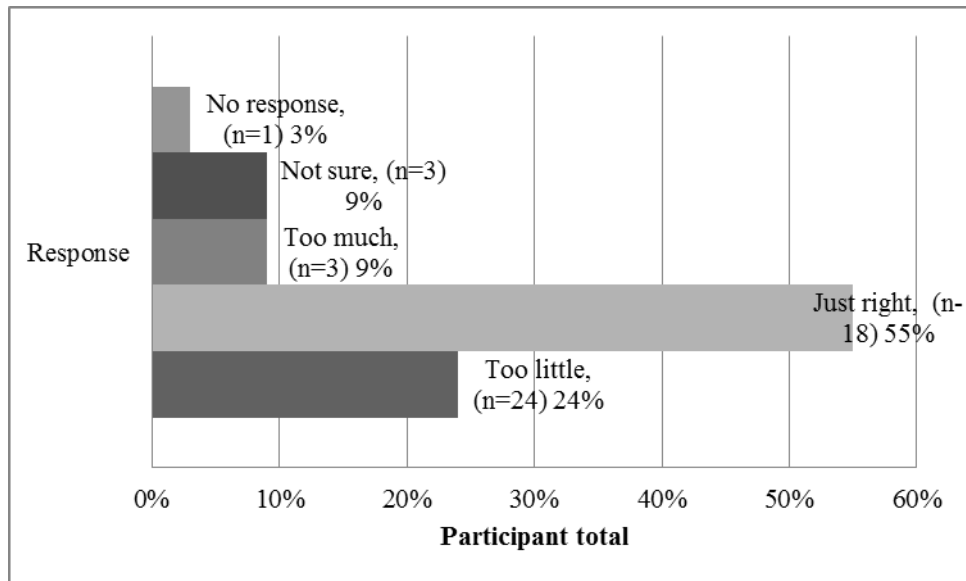
hindrances to effective English teaching (Q16), as shown in Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, respectively.

To get a better idea of teachers opinions on the amount of time allotted to English teaching, data is reported in Figure 3.



**Figure 3 Responses to the number of hours allocated for English teaching**

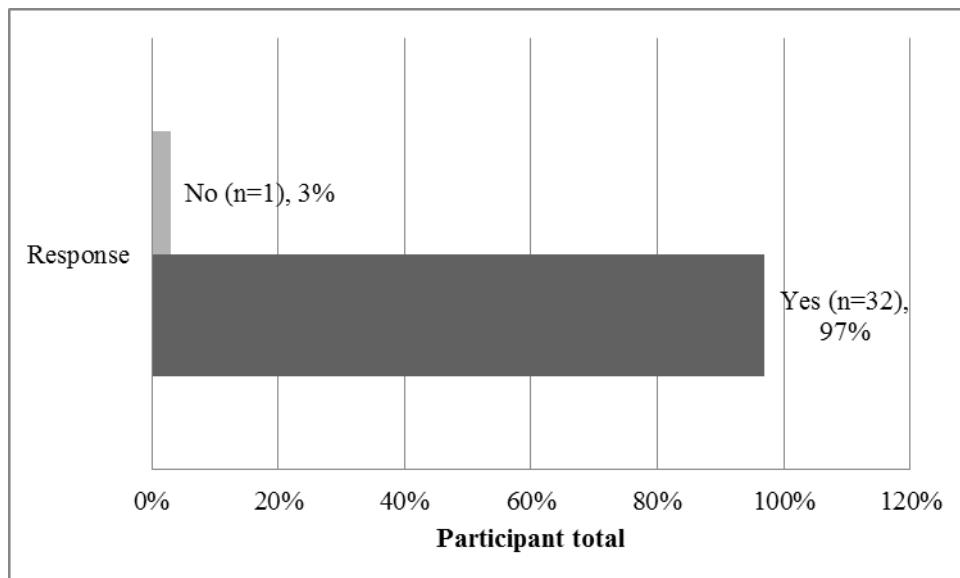
In Figure 3, responses to the question regarding the number of hours allocated to teaching English show that a majority (55%) of the teachers believe there are not enough hours devoted to teaching English. Teachers were also asked whether they believed the content of the English syllabus was adequate. Results of these responses are given in Figure 4.



**Figure 4 Responses to adequacy of content of English syllabus**

In Figure 4, data show that most respondents believe that the syllabus content is just right, with about a quarter of the respondents stating that there is not enough content covered in the syllabus.

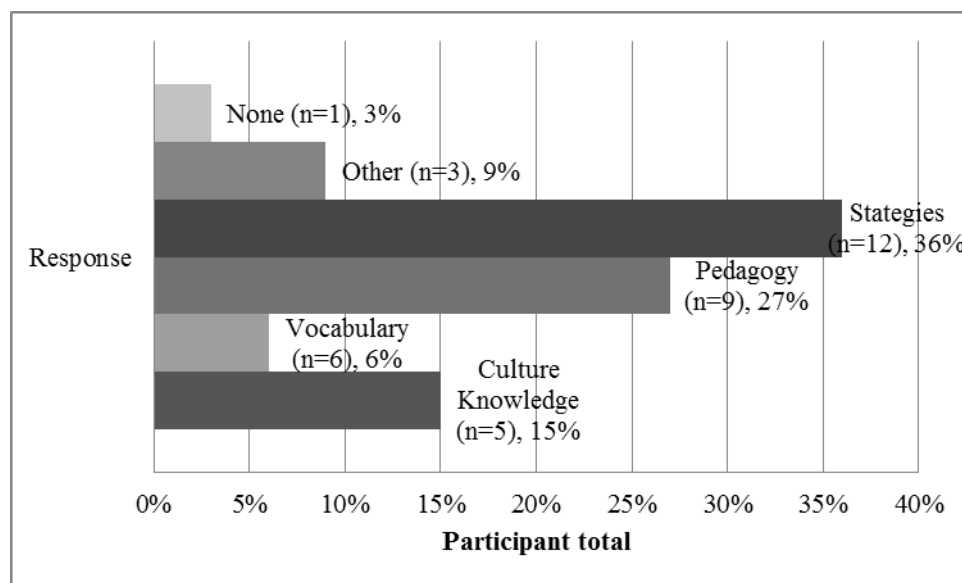
To get a better picture of how teachers feel about teaching English, question 14 asked how comfortable the teachers were teaching English. Their responses are shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5 Responses to how comfortable a teacher is teaching English**

According to Figure 5, almost every teacher feels comfortable teaching English. The respondent that is not comfortable teaching English is over 50 years old, has an elementary education degree, and has been teaching for over 16 years. That respondent also expressed that a lack of confidence in speaking English was a problem for her.

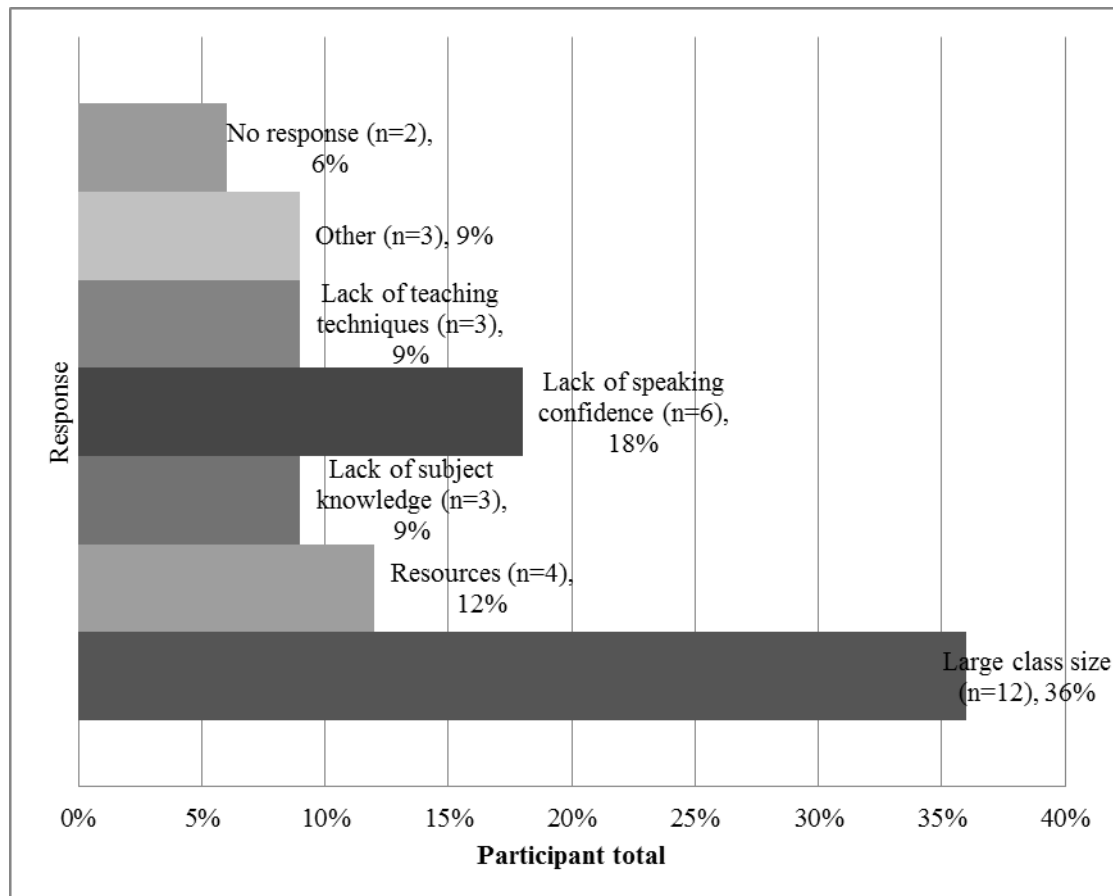
Most teachers believe there is room for improvement in their teaching. They will take courses to develop professional. Areas where teachers would like additional training (Q15) are reported in Figure 6.



**Figure 6 Responses areas of teaching teachers would like additional training**

The question about additional training needs, represented in Figure 6, allowed for as many responses as each participant felt necessary. There were 40 items circled instead of the normal 33 given for other questions. Teaching strategies and pedagogy were areas that teachers wanted the most additional training (68% of all responses). Fifteen percent of the respondents expressed an interest in completing more training in knowledge of the culture. Three respondents filled in the 'Other' line saying they would like additional training in: pronunciation, classroom discipline and management, and English for everyday use. Besides have additional training needs, there are generally other factors perceived as needing attention.

Sometimes teachers believe factors such as large class size, limited resources, knowledge, confidence, etc. make it difficult to teach effectively. Responses to question 16, which asked for the major hindrance to teaching of English, are reported in Figure 7.



**Figure 7 Responses to major hindrances to effective teaching**

From the responses to major hindrances to effective teaching, presented in Figure 7, over a third of the respondents believed that large class size was a major hindrance while 18% expressed that lack of confidence in speaking English was a problem. Other responses written in, but not displayed on this chart were: environment, inadequate time to prepare an efficient teaching plan, and lack of English environment, in terms of people to speak with.

In order to better understand elementary school Thai English teachers, the teachers were asked to write any comments they may have about teaching English (Q17). Nine

participants responded to this question. They responded in Thai and English. The Thai answers were translated and all responses are given below:

1. Number of English hours per week is not enough.
2. In the 5th and 6th grade, they should study more about reading and writing skills.
3. Students should be taught by a foreign teacher at least an hour per week.
4. Workshops on English Teaching Techniques should be provided.
5. School hours are too little to practice the continuous learning skill.
6. An e-learning program for students at each level should be provided.
7. The teachers in school have to be the models to students, such as speaking English so the students will imitate the teachers. And the teachers should emphasize the importance of English language knowledge also.
8. From my point of view, English shouldn't be a compulsory subject. This is related to the aspect of motivation. Thai kids have been forced to study for a long time and they didn't start from "What I want to learn". They started from "what the adult wants me to learn." Again, I think that the student in the city may be interested in learning English more than the student in the suburb area. They always speak Thai to their father, mother, and friends. Once they find their motivation, then they will start to look at English in a pleasurable way, not this kind of "every day" English. But most of all, I'll do my best. Sorry for the tone of this comment. (e-mail address given)
9. For primary school, the number of class may be or should be 10-20 students per class.

10. Because of the course specifications which emphasize grammar, teachers must follow and help students pass their exam. Course detail should emphasize communication skill to improve their English in daily life.

11. English teachers should be persons who have had practice in English teaching. They may have more techniques for students to study English.

12. Thailand cannot use English language in everyday life like a second language because Thais' are afraid to use it and too shy. They are afraid to say wrong sentences or wrong words.

These responses show that teachers have valid concerns about the teaching of English. Comments suggest that the teaching hours are not sufficient, class size should be smaller, there should be more instruction in reading and writing skills for upper grades, and teachers should be good models by speaking English themselves. Teachers would also like more training in language teaching methods and more opportunities to practice speaking English themselves. One respondent wrote about seeing inclusion of EFL in the curriculum from a student's perspective, commenting that students do not always understand the significance of learning another language, especially while they are still learning their own language.

## **4.2 Results of the study**

The results of this study are presented based on the three research questions mentioned in Chapter 1 and are reported below. Data were gathered to see how the teachers perceive their English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. These data were analyzed to determine if there was a correlation between the two items. Independent variables such as gender, age, education level, education major, and teaching experience were also investigated to determine their effect on self-perceived English proficiency and English teaching efficacy.

### **4.2.1 Self-perceived English proficiency levels**

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The data gathered for research question 1, "What are the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers in Thailand, in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills?" are reported here.

The Butler (2004)-modified FLOSEM (1999) was the instrument used for the self-perceived English proficiency levels. Of the 33 participants, only 30 filled in the proficiency section of the survey. As mentioned earlier, language proficiency is divided into four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are considered receptive skills and speaking and writing are known as productive skills. The results of the perceived listening proficiency section are reported in Table 10. The frequency is given for each level that was chosen. The descriptors, as mentioned in Chapter 3, and again reported here, which correspond to the Butler (2004) instrument have been provided in the following answers.

**Table 10 Self-perceived listening proficiency scale**

<b>Proficiency Level</b>	<b>Proficiency descriptor</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
1.0	<b>Limited ability</b>	0	0	0
1.5	Low beginner	0	0	0
2.0	Mid beginner	1	3.0	3.3
2.5	High beginner	0	0	0
3.0	<b>Low intermediate</b>	4	12.1	13.3
3.5	Mid intermediate	5	15.2	16.7
4.0	<b>High intermediate</b>	8	24.2	26.7
4.5	Low advanced	5	15.2	16.7
5.0	Mid advanced	3	9.1	10.0
5.5	High advanced	3	9.1	10.0
6.0	<b>Native-like proficiency</b>	1	3.0	3.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Missing</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>9.1</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>100.0</b>	



The lowest rating for listening, a receptive skill, is one score of 2 (mid beginner) and the highest was one score of 6 (native-like proficiency), as shown in Table 10. As seen in the boxed area, just over 60% of the reporting respondents rated themselves between 3.5 (mid intermediate) to 4.5 (low advanced). The ability to understand what is being said in the target language of English is important. The mean and median for the 30 participants of this section are reported in Table 11.

**Table 11 Overall average for self-perceived listening proficiency**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<b>Self-perceived listening proficiency</b>
Mean	4.12
Median	4.00

(n=30)

The mean average in listening was 4.12, which corresponds to Butler's high intermediate level. This score indicates that the respondents believe they possess good English listening skills. They can understand most of what is being said in a conversation at near normal speed (Butler, 2004).

Speaking proficiency, a productive skill, is crucial to being able to successfully teach others another language. The perceived speaking proficiency of the elementary school Thai English teachers is reported in Table 12.

**Table 12 Self-perceived speaking proficiency**

<b>Proficiency level</b>	<b>Proficiency descriptor</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
1.0	<b>Limited ability</b>	0	0	0
1.5	Low beginner	0	0	0
2.0	Mid beginner	1	3.0	3.3
2.5	High beginner	0	0	0
3.0	<b>Low intermediate</b>	3	9.1	10.0

3.5	Mid intermediate	10	30.3	<b>33.3</b>
4.0	<b>High intermediate</b>	6	18.2	<b>20.0</b>
4.5	Low advanced	4	12.1	<b>13.3</b>
5.0	Mid advanced	4	12.1	<b>13.3</b>
5.5	High advanced	2	6.1	6.7
6.0	<b>Native-like</b>	0	0	0
<b>proficiency</b>				
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Missing</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>9.1</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Data from Table 12 shows that the highest frequency of participants (33%) rate themselves at 3.5 (mid intermediate), 20% at level 4, 13.3% at level 4.5 (low advanced), and another 13.3% at level 5 (mid advanced) for speaking proficiency, meaning that the vast majority (80%) of the reporting participants rate themselves as having mid intermediate to mid advanced speaking proficiency. The averaged data for speaking proficiency are described in Table 13.

**Table 13 Overall average for self-perceived speaking proficiency**

<b>Descriptive statistics</b>	<b>Speaking</b>
Mean	3.97
Median	4.000

(n=30)

For speaking proficiency the overall mean score is 3.97, with a median score of 4, as shown in Table 13. This information is representative of a high intermediate proficiency rating for the sample. This means that teachers can express themselves “at near normal speed but may have to slow down when expressing complex ideas and less common expressions” (Butler, 2004).

Another receptive skill is the reading skill. The reading proficiency level is a good indicator of how well a person is able to read and understand, or comprehend, what is being

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conveyed. Good reading ability is the foundation to learning new information about the target language. Table 14 shows the self-perceived reading proficiency scores of the 30 respondents who completed this section.

**Table 14 Self-perceived reading proficiency**

<b>Proficiency level</b>	<b>Proficiency descriptor</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
1.0	<b>Limited ability</b>	1	3.0	3.3
1.5	Low beginner	0	0	0
2.0	Mid beginner	1	3.0	3.3
2.5	High beginner	1	3.0	3.3
3.0	<b>Low intermediate</b>	3	9.1	10.0
3.5	Mid intermediate	0	0	0
4.0	<b>High intermediate</b>	12	36.4	<b>40.0</b>
4.5	Low advanced	5	15.2	<b>16.7</b>
5.0	Mid advanced	4	12.1	<b>13.3</b>
5.5	High advanced	2	6.1	6.7
6.0	<b>Native-like proficiency</b>	1	3.0	3.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Missing</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>9.1</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 14 shows that 70% of the respondents rate themselves between 4 (40%), 4.5 (17%), and 5 (13%) for reading proficiency, with the highest frequency at 4 (40%). This shows that the teachers believe their proficiency levels are at high intermediate level or higher. The mean average for reading proficiency is reported in Table 15.

**Table 15 Overall average for self-perceived reading proficiency**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Mean	4.03

Median 4.00

(n=30)

As shown in Table 15, at a median score of 4, this shows that overall the respondents believe they are of high intermediate proficiency in reading skills. The teachers who participated in this study can understand most written English texts, depending on the complexity of the genre. They still may need to use a dictionary to understand some words (Butler, 2004).

While speaking and listening are easier to master, reading and writing are often more challenging and take more time to master. The writing skill tends to be hard to master in a native language, much less a foreign language. Writing proficiency is the result of concentrated practice and general knowledge of the conventions of the language. Results of self-perceived writing proficiency of the respondents are shown in Table 16.

**Table 16 Self-perceived writing proficiency**

<b>Proficiency level</b>	<b>Proficiency descriptor</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
1.0	<b>Limited ability</b>	0	0	0
1.5	Low beginner	0	0	0
2.0	Mid beginner	0	0	0
2.5	High beginner	0	0	0
3.0	<b>Low intermediate</b>	8	24.2	<b>26.7</b>
3.5	Mid intermediate	5	15.2	<b>16.7</b>
4.0	<b>High intermediate</b>	7	21.2	<b>23.3</b>
4.5	Low advanced	5	15.2	<b>16.7</b>
5.0	Mid advanced	1	3.0	3.3
5.5	High advanced	4	12.1	13.3
6.0	<b>Native-like proficiency</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Missing</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>9.1</b>	

<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100.0</b>
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Data in Table 16 shows that a large percentage, 83%, of the respondents rated themselves between 3.0 and 4.5 or low intermediate to low advanced level, respectively. There is a broader range from 3 (27%), 3.5 (17%), 4 (23%), to 4.5 (17%). The overall mean of all respondents for writing proficiency is shown in Table 17.

**Table 17 Overall average for self-perceived writing proficiency**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Mean	3.97
Median	4.000

(n=30)

As shown in Table 17, the mean for writing proficiency, a productive skill, is the same as the other productive skill, speaking. The median score of 4 represents a high intermediate proficiency level. People at this level have “sufficient vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to write in English with relative ease. Occasionally they will make noticeable mistakes in grammar and vocabulary” (Butler, 2004).

The mean average of each participant was figured to get an overall score in each category of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The overall self-reported proficiency level of all participants is reported in Table 18.

**Table 18 Descriptive statistics for self-perceived English proficiency in all**

<b>English skills</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Listening	4.12	.90
Speaking	3.97	.81
Reading	4.03	1.05
Writing	3.97	.84
Overall	4.02	.74

(n=30)

In Table 18, it can be seen that all domains are rated closely. Self-perceived listening proficiency was rated the highest, followed by reading, and speaking and writing. The overall mean score for English proficiency is 4.02, which is considered high intermediate by Butler (2004). Generally people at this level have enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to listen and converse in English at near normal speed, as well as understand what is read, with the use of a dictionary, most of the time, and write with ease, making grammatical mistakes occasionally (Butler, 2004).

## Summary

A self-perceived language proficiency scale was used to determine the perceived language proficiency of elementary school Thai English teachers as put forth in the first research question and objective. The descriptive statistics show that teachers rated their English proficiency in this order: listening ( $\bar{x}$ =4.12), reading ( $\bar{x}$ =4.03), with speaking and writing being equal ( $\bar{x}$ =3.97). This corresponds to a high intermediate level of proficiency, as reported by Butler (2004), in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

### 4.2.2 Self-reported teaching efficacy

This section of the study reports on data gathered to answer research question 2, "*What are the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers?*"

The study used one of the versions of the questionnaire from the Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) study. Questions were used from both the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) short- and long-form questions to assess the teachers' sense of English teaching efficacy. The questions use a Likert scale, with 1 = 'nothing' at all, 3 = very little, 5 = some influence, 7 = quite a bit, and 9 = a great deal, for answers. The questions were modified with a focus on teaching efficacy in the English classroom similar to the Chacon (2004) and Eslami and Fatahi (2008) studies. The questions were meant to be a measurement of teaching efficacy with subscales of student

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engagement (SE), instructional strategies (IS), with personal teaching efficacy (PTE) questions 16, 17, and 18 added by the researcher of this study. Descriptive statistics, with questions arranged in the subscales, are shown in Table 19.

**Table 19 Descriptive statistics of elementary school Thai English teachers' self-reported English teaching efficacy**

Self-reported English efficacy questions	Mean	SD
<b>Student engagement</b>		
1. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in learning English?	6.85	1.23
2. How much can you do to make the English class enjoyable for all students?	7.03	1.10
3. How much can you do to make students believe that they can do well in English?	6.24	1.64
4. How much can you do to make students appreciate the potential benefits associated with learning English?	6.79	1.41
6. How much can you do to get students to turn in assignments or papers promptly?	6.55	1.28
13. How much can you do to influence student performance in English class?	6.61	1.17
15. How well can you get students to work together during English class?	6.82	1.72
<b>Instructional strategies</b>		
5. How much can you implement alternate teaching strategies in your English class?	6.85	1.20
7. How much can you provide appropriate challenges for very proficient students?	7.00	1.09
8. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	7.39	1.09
9. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies in your English class?	6.67	1.02
10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when your students are confused?	7.09	1.13

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11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	7.03	1.13
12. How well can you implement alternative instructional strategies when a certain strategy does not work?	6.91	1.04
14. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	6.94	.933
<b>Personal teaching efficacy</b>		
16. Overall, how confident are you in your English abilities to teach your current level(s) of students.	7.58	1.22
17. Overall, how confident are you of your English abilities to teach intermediate or upper-intermediate level students.	7.15	1.40
18. Overall, how confident are you in your abilities as a teacher teaching subjects in Thai.	7.39	1.25
<b>Overall mean score</b>	<b>7.02</b>	<b>1.23</b>
1=nothing at all, 3=very little, 5=some influence, 7=quite a bit, 9=a great deal		

Table 19 shows that the mean average for all questions is in a close range. A low mean score of 6.24 in the student engagement section represents that teachers believe they have more than "some influence" but not "quite a bit" of influence relating to the question, "How much can you do to make students believe that they can do well in English?" The highest mean score of 7.58, corresponding to personal teaching efficacy beliefs show that they have "quite a bit" of confidence in relation to the question, "Overall, how confident are you in your English proficiency to teach your current level(s) of students?" The overall mean score for the English teaching efficacy scale is 7.02, which means that teachers believe they have "quite a bit" of influence with their teaching of students. The overall score was then used to determine if there was a correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers (research question 3).

The mean average for each subcategory, SE, IS, and PTE, of the English teaching efficacy scale was also calculated and is reported in Table 20.

**Table 20 Overall average for subscales of the English teaching efficacy scale**

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<b>Subscale of English teaching efficacy</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Student Engagement (SE)	6.70	.92
Instructional Strategies (IS)	6.98	.80
Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE)	7.37	.99

Teachers' self evaluations, according to subcategory, give a more detailed look at their sense of teaching efficacy. Table 20 indicates that teachers believe they are more effective in their use of IS (6.98) than ability to engage students (6.70), yet rate themselves the highest for personal teaching efficacy (7.37), or belief that they have a greater influence in student outcomes than research might suggest. The teachers represented in this study believe their personal teaching efficacy, use of instructional strategies, as well as being able to successfully engage students to a lesser extent, have 'quite a bit' of influence on students learning of English (Butler, 2004).

## Summary

This part of the study displayed the results of the self-reported English teaching efficacy scale. It showed that teachers believe they have a higher sense of efficacy in PTE, which was rated at a mean score of 7.37, or just more than 'quite a bit' of influence on their ability to affect student outcomes. Instructional strategies were also rated at 'quite a bit' of influence, with the ability to engage students being rated the lowest at just under the 'quite a bit' of influence level. This shows that teachers have higher than average confidence in their own teaching effectiveness and believe that their IS are effective for achieving good student outcomes.

### 4.2.3 Correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy

The third research question, "Is there a correlation between self-reported English proficiency levels and self-reported English teaching efficacy?" will be the focus of this section. Results of data collection will be presented. Statistical analysis was performed using

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the Pearson product-moment correlation method to determine if there was a correlation between English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 21.

**Table 21 Pearson correlation of English proficiency to English teaching efficacy**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Statistical model</b>	<b>Overall proficiency</b>	<b>Overall English teaching efficacy</b>
Overall self-perceived English proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.135
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.476
	N	30	30
Overall self-reported English teaching efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.135	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.476	-
	N	30	33

( $p < .05$ )

Table 21 shows that there was no correlation found between overall self-perceived English proficiency and overall self-reported English teaching efficacy. However, it was prudent to find some other findings of the independent variables collect from demographic data of the participants to compliment the finding of a correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers. The independent variables of gender, age, education level, education major and teaching experience were selected as they were perceived to be related to one's English proficiency and English teaching efficacy.

#### **4.2.3.1 Investigation of independent variables**

Independent variables such as gender, age, level of education, education major, and teaching experience were also investigated, using frequency statistics, in relation to the proficiency domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and teaching efficacy

subcategories of student engagement (SE), instructional strategies (IS), and personal teaching efficacy (PTE).

Gender was analyzed to see if there was any variation between males and females in their reported perceived English proficiency levels. Table 22 shows the mean average for the four domains of proficiency.

**Table 22 Descriptive statistics of self-perceived English proficiency in relation to gender**

Gender	N	Self-perceived		
		English proficiency	Mean	SD
Female	25	Listening	3.96	.80
		Speaking	3.88	.78
		Reading	4.06	.87
		Writing	3.86	.74
		Mean	3.94	.80
Male	5	Listening	4.9	1.08
		Speaking	4.4	.89
		Reading	3.9	2.27
		Writing	4.5	1.17
		Mean	4.43	1.80

Table 22 shows that males rate their proficiency levels higher than females in listening, speaking, and writing, but somewhat lower in reading (0.07 variance in the mean). The overall self-perceived proficiency of males is 4.43, close to low advanced level, while females rate their English proficiency at 3.94 overall, which is closer to high intermediate proficiency. The responses of males and females, as shown in Table 23, were calculated to see if there were any differences in their self-rating of English teaching efficacy.

**Table 23 Descriptive statistics of self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to gender**

Gender	N	Self-reported English		
		teaching efficacy	Mean	SD
Female	25	SE	6.82	.92
		IS	7.01	.85
		PTE	7.33	1.01
		Mean	7.05	.93
Male	5	SE	6.03	.69
		IS	6.88	.50
		PTE	7.60	.92
		Mean	6.84	.70

In contrast, Table 23 shows that females rate their SE close to the "quite a bit" of influence value, where as the males believe they were between having "some influence" and "quite a bit" of influence. For IS, again females rate themselves higher by reporting that they have "quite a bit" of influence; with the males rating themselves close behind. The males rate their PTE (7.6) at a slightly higher level beyond "quite a bit" of influence, while the females (7.33) are closer to the "quite a bit" descriptor level. Overall females rated their English teaching efficacy higher at 7.05, which corresponds to "quite a bit" influence.

With age comes more life experience. Age was investigated to see if there was any difference in proficiency level between age groups. Table 24 shows frequency statistics for each age group.

**Table 24 Descriptive statistics of self-perceived English proficiency in relation to age**

Age group (years)	N	Self-perceived English proficiency	Mean	SD
20-30	10	Listening	4.45	.64
		Speaking	4.10	.61

		Reading	4.55	.64
		Writing	4.15	.82
		Mean	4.31	.68
31-40	7	Listening	3.71	.90
		Speaking	3.93	.79
		Reading	3.29	1.73
		Writing	3.57	.84
		Mean	3.63	1.07
41-50	6	Listening	3.75	1.13
		Speaking	3.50	.84
		Reading	3.75	.88
		Writing	3.58	.58
		Mean	3.65	.86
51+	7	Listening	4.36	.94
		Speaking	4.21	1.04
		Reading	4.29	.99
		Writing	4.43	.89
		Mean	4.32	.97

Table 24 shows that the 20-30 age group has the highest self-perceived level of proficiency (4.45) in the listening domain. This age group also has the same level of proficiency in the reading domain. The proficiency level is close to the low advanced level (Table 16). The 50+ age group has the highest self-reported proficiency in the speaking and writing domains with reported levels of 4.21 and 4.43, respectively. These levels are between high intermediate level and low advanced proficiency levels. Overall the youngest and oldest age group rate their English proficiency extremely close at 4.31 and 4.32, respectively. Age was also investigated for a relationship to the English teaching efficacy subscales of SE, IS, and PTE. Frequency statistics are shown for SE, IS, and PTE in Table 25.

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**Table 25 Descriptive statistics of self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to age**

Age group (years)	N	Self-reported English teaching efficacy		
			Mean	SD
20-30	10	SE	6.27	.55
		IS	6.59	.51
		PTE	7.03	.87
		Mean	6.63	.64
31-40	7	SE	6.82	.91
		IS	6.88	.80
		PTE	7.38	.95
		Mean	7.02	.87
41-50	7	SE	6.37	1.09
		IS	6.63	.74
		PTE	6.90	1.18
		Mean	6.63	1.00
51+	9	SE	7.33	.88
		IS	7.79	.57
		PTE	8.11	.62
		Mean	7.74	.69

As seen in Table 25, the 51+ age group rate themselves highest in the SE and IS subscales of the teaching efficacy scale. For SE, they rate themselves as being able to have "quite a bit" of influence, whereas for IS and PTE they believe they could have more influence than "quite a bit" yet not quite believing that their teaching could have a "great deal" of influence on student outcomes. The 20-30 age group report the lowest rating of efficacy in SE and IS, while the 41-50 group rate their PTE the lowest of all age groups.

Besides age, level of education was investigated to see if there was any relationship to English proficiency. Data were gathered and are reported in Table 26.

**Table 26 Descriptive statistics self-perceived English proficiency in relation to education level**

Level of education	N	Self-perceived English proficiency	Mean	SD
Bachelor	16	Listening	3.94	.83
		Speaking	3.94	.93
		Reading	3.91	1.37
		Writing	3.97	.78
		Mean	3.94	.98
Master	13	Listening	4.23	.95
		Speaking	3.92	.64
		Reading	4.08	.84
		Writing	3.89	.92
		Mean	4.03	.84
PhD	1	Listening	5.5	-
		Speaking	5	-
		Reading	5.5	-
		Writing	5	-
		Mean	5.25	-

The PhD respondent has the highest self-reported rating in all domains, as shown in Table 26. There is only a slight difference in the mean average between the self-reported ratings of the Bachelor- and Master-level group in all domains. They rated their proficiency levels at a median average of 4 (not shown in Table), or high intermediate level, in all domains. To determine if level of education had an effect on English teaching efficacy, data were calculated and are shown in Table 27.

**Table 27 Descriptive statistics of self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to education level**

Level of education	N	Self-reported English teaching efficacy		
			Mean	SD
BS	18	SE	6.44	.74
		IS	6.88	.62
		PTE	7.35	.76
		Mean	6.89	.71
MS	14	SE	7.02	1.08
		IS	7.14	1.02
		PTE	7.40	1.28
		Mean	7.19	1.13
PhD	1	SE	6.85	-
		IS	6.62	-
		PTE	7.33	-
		Mean	6.93	-

Table 27 shows that SE is rated the highest at 7.02 by the Master-level group. The MS group also has the highest self-reported rating for IS, yet the Bachelor-level group report the highest PTE score. The Master-level group has a higher overall self-reported teaching efficacy (7.19).

Education major was also investigated in relation to English proficiency and teaching efficacy. Data were analyzed to see if education major such as non-major or English major had an affect on perceived English proficiency. Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 28.



**Table 28 Descriptive statistics of self-perceived English proficiency in relation to education major**

<b>Education</b>		<b>Self-perceived</b>		
<b>major</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>English proficiency</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
non-English	13	Listening	4.00	.82
		Speaking	3.92	.81
		Reading	4.19	.1.01
		Writing	3.96	.83
		Mean	4.02	87
English	17	Listening	4.21	.99
		Speaking	4.00	.83
		Reading	3.91	.1.28
		Writing	3.97	.87
		Mean	4.02	.99

Table 28 shows that there is little variance in self-reported proficiency levels in listening, speaking, reading, and writing between respondents with an English major degree and another type of degree. Both groups rate themselves at 4.02, high intermediate proficiency. Frequency statistics were used to determine if there is any relation between education major and the teaching efficacy subscales, and are reported in Table 29.

**Table 29 Descriptive statistics of self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to education major**

<b>Education</b>		<b>Self-reported English</b>		
<b>major</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>teaching efficacy</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
non-English	14	SE	7.19	.65
		IS	7.28	.75
		PTE	7.40	.84
		Mean	7.29	.75

English	19	SE	6.33	.94
		IS	6.77	.79
		PTE	7.35	1.11
		Mean	6.82	.95

Interestingly, non-English majors perceive their English teaching efficacy to be higher than the English majors in SE, IS, and PTE, as shown in Table 29. Overall the non-English majors rate their English teaching efficacy at 7.29, while the English majors rate themselves at 6.82. The mean variance for SE was 0.76, 0.51 for IS and 0.05 for PTE between the two groups.

To determine if the number of years of teaching experience had any bearing on proficiency levels, data was gathered and results are shown in Table 30.

**Table 30 Descriptive statistics self-perceived English proficiency in relation to teaching experience**

Teaching experience (years)	N	Self-perceived English proficiency	Mean	SD
1-3	6	Listening	3.83	.61
		Speaking	3.92	.58
		Reading	4.00	.63
		Writing	3.75	.94
		Mean	3.88	.69
4-6	5	Listening	4.70	.57
		Speaking	4.20	.67
		Reading	3.70	2.08
		Writing	4.30	.76
		Mean	4.23	1.02
7-10	4	Listening	4.25	1.19
		Speaking	4.25	.87

		Reading	4.38	1.60
		Writing	3.75	.96
		Mean	4.16	1.16
10-15	5	Listening	3.30	.84
		Speaking	4.15	.88
		Reading	3.70	.97
		Writing	3.80	.76
		Mean	3.74	.86
16+	10	Listening	4.35	.91
		Speaking	4.15	.88
		Reading	4.25	.83
		Writing	4.10	.91
		Mean	4.21	.88

Teachers with 4-6 years of teaching experience, as shown in Table 30, have the highest self-assessment for English proficiency in the listening and writing domains, while teachers with 7-10 years experience have the highest self-reported proficiency in the speaking and reading domains. Teachers with 4-6 years of teaching experience perceive their English proficiency to be the highest overall at 4.23, or just over high intermediate. Teaching experience was also investigated in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy and is reported in Table 31.

**Table 31 Descriptive statistics self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to teaching experience**

Teaching experience (years)	N	Self-reported English teaching efficacy	Mean	SD
1-3	6	SE	6.21	.56
		IS	6.65	.33
		PTE	6.83	.46

4-6	5	SE	6.09	.66
		IS	6.38	.67
		PTE	7.20	1.17
7-10	4	SE	7.00	.72
		IS	6.88	.80
		PTE	7.25	.83
10-15	5	SE	6.66	1.09
		IS	6.83	.76
		PTE	7.33	1.15
16+	10	SE	7.08	1.01
		IS	7.47	.83
		PTE	7.74	1.06
		Mean	7.43	.97

Teachers with more than 16 years of teaching experience rate themselves the highest in all subscales, SE, IS, and PTE, for English teaching efficacy with a mean average score of 7.43, as shown in Table 31. The 4-6 years teaching experience group has the lowest self-reported teaching efficacy in SE and IS, while the 1-3 year experience group reports the lowest PTE rating.

The report of descriptive statistics for independent variables presented above show more specific information about the participants in relation to their self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. The research then further investigated whether these independent variables were statistically significant when compared to self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Cross tabulation analysis and one way ANOVA were employed to determine statistical significance between them. It was found that there were some statistically significant findings in relation to the independent variables of gender, age, education level, education major, and teaching

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experience, and English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. At the domain level for the proficiency scale there were some statistically significant findings and are presented here. One-way ANOVA was used to determine a relationship between the five variables and English proficiency and English teaching efficacy and is presented below.

One-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the effect of gender in relation to English proficiency, as shown in Table 32.

**Table 32 One-way ANOVA on gender differences in relation to self-perceived English proficiency**

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Listening	Between Groups	3.68	1	3.68	5.11	.032*
	Within Groups	20.16	28	.72		
	Total	23.84	29			
Speaking	Between Groups	1.13	1	1.13	1.77	.194
	Within Groups	17.84	28	.64		
	Total	18.97	29			
Reading	Between Groups	.007	1	.01	.01	.940
	Within Groups	31.86	28	1.14		
	Total	31.87	29			
Writing	Between Groups	1.71	1	1.71	2.55	.122
	Within Groups	18.76	28	.67		
	Total	20.47	29			

( $p < .05$ )\*Statistical significance

Table 32 shows a statistically significant finding between gender and the listening domain. One-way ANOVA for English teaching efficacy was also determined for gender in relation to English teaching efficacy and is shown in Table 33.

**Table 33 One way ANOVA test on gender difference in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy**

<b>Subscale</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
SE	Between Groups	2.633	1	2.633	3.298	.079

	Within Groups	24.745	31	.798		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	.071	1	.071	.108	.745
	Within Groups	20.453	31	.660		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	.302	1	.302	.302	.587
	Within Groups	30.978	31	.999		
	Total	31.279	32			

( $p < .05$ )

Table 33 shows that there was no statistical significance found between gender and the English teaching efficacy subscales of SE, IS, or PTE. One-way ANOVA was also used to see if age had an effect on self-perceived English proficiency and is shown in Table 34.

**Table 34 One-way ANOVA on age in relation to self-perceived English proficiency**

Skill	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Listening	Between Groups	3.456	3	1.152	1.469	.246
	Within Groups	20.386	26	.784		
	Total	23.842	29			
Speaking	Between Groups	1.924	3	.641	.978	.418
	Within Groups	17.043	26	.655		
	Total	18.967	29			
Reading	Between Groups	6.124	3	2.041	2.062	.130
	Within Groups	25.743	26	.990		
	Total	31.867	29			
Writing	Between Groups	3.805	3	1.268	1.979	.142
	Within Groups	16.662	26	.641		
	Total	20.467	29			

( $p < .05$ )

There are no statistically significant findings for age in relation to English proficiency, as seen in Table 34. Self-reported English teaching efficacy was also analyzed and results are shown in Table 35.

**Table 35 One way ANOVA test on age in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy**

Subscale	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SE	Between Groups	6.316	3	2.105	2.899	.052
	Within Groups	21.062	29	.726		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	8.428	3	2.809	6.736	.001*
	Within Groups	12.095	29	.417		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	7.592	3	2.531	3.098	.042*
	Within Groups	23.687	29	.817		
	Total	31.279	32			

( $p < .05$ )\*Statistical significance

Table 35 shows that age was found to have a statistically significant effect on the use of IS and PTE in English teaching efficacy. Additionally, education level was analyzed in relation to self-perceived English proficiency, as shown in Table 36.

**Table 36 One-way ANOVA on education level in relation to self-perceived English proficiency**

Skill	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Listening	Between Groups	2.596	2	1.298	1.650	.211
	Within Groups	21.245	27	.787		
	Total	23.842	29			

Skill	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Speaking	Between Groups	1.106	2	.553	.836	.444
	Within Groups	17.861	27	.662		
	Total	18.967	29			
Reading	Between Groups	2.209	2	1.105	1.006	.379
	Within Groups	29.657	27	1.098		
	Total	31.867	29			
Writing	Between Groups	1.155	2	.578	.808	.456
	Within Groups	19.311	27	.715		
	Total	20.467	29			

( $p < .05$ )

As shown in Table 36, there are no statistically significant findings between education level and English proficiency. Statistical analysis of education level and self-reported English teaching efficacy are reported in Table 37.

**Table 37 One way ANOVA test on education level in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy**

Subscale	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
SE	Between Groups	2.711	2	1.356	1.649	.209
	Within Groups	24.667	30	.822		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	.670	2	.335	.506	.608
	Within Groups	19.854	30	.662		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	.024	2	.012	.011	.989



Within Groups	31.256	30	1.042
Total	31.279	32	

( $p < .05$ )

Again, there are no statistically significant findings between education level and self-reported English teaching efficacy, as shown in Table 37. The independent variable of education major was also analyzed for statistical significance and results are reported in Table 38.

**Table 38 One-way ANOVA on education major in relation to self-perceived English proficiency**

Skill	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Listening	Between Groups	.312	1	.312	.372	.547
	Within Groups	23.529	28	.840		
	Total	23.842	29			
Speaking	Between Groups	.044	1	.044	.064	.801
	Within Groups	18.923	28	.676		
	Total	18.967	29			
Reading	Between Groups	.362	1	.362	.322	.575
	Within Groups	31.505	28	1.125		
	Total	31.867	29			
Writing	Between Groups	.001	1	.001	.001	.977
	Within Groups	20.466	28	.731		
	Total	20.467	29			

( $p < .05$ )

Table 38 data show that there is no statistical significance between education major and English proficiency. Table 39 shows results of statistical analysis between education major and self-reported teaching efficacy.

**Table 39 One way ANOVA test on education major in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy**

Subscale	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SE	Between Groups	6.004	1	6.004	8.708	.006*
	Within Groups	21.374	31	.689		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	2.072	1	2.072	3.482	.072
	Within Groups	18.451	31	.595		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	.023	1	.023	.023	.880
	Within Groups	31.256	31	1.008		
	Total	31.279	32			

( $p < .05$ )\*Statistical significance

Table 39 shows that there is a statistically significant effect of education major in relation to the SE subscale in English teaching efficacy. Teaching experience was also investigated for statistically significant findings, as shown in Table 40.

**Table 40 One-way ANOVA on teaching experience in relation to self-perceived English proficiency**

Skill	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Listening	Between Groups	6.133	4	1.533	2.165	.102
	Within Groups	17.708	25	.708		
	Total	23.842	29			
Speaking	Between Groups	3.883	4	.971	1.609	.203
	Within Groups	15.083	25	.603		
	Total	18.967	29			

Skill	Variance	Sum of		Mean	F	Sig.
		Squares	df	Square		
Reading	Between Groups	1.554	4	.389	.320	.862
	Within Groups	30.313	25	1.213		
	Total	31.867	29			
Writing	Between Groups	1.342	4	.335	.438	.780
	Within Groups	19.125	25	.765		
	Total	20.467	29			

( $p < .05$ )

Teaching experience does not effect English proficiency, as shown in Table 40. Self-reported teaching efficacy was also analyzed in relation to teaching experience and is reported in Table 41.

**Table 41 One way ANOVA test on teaching experience in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy**

Subscale	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
SE	Between Groups	5.518	4	1.380	1.767	.164
	Within Groups	21.860	28	.781		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	5.800	4	1.450	2.757	.047*
	Within Groups	14.724	28	.526		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	3.751	4	.938	.954	.448
	Within Groups	27.529	28	.983		
	Total	31.279	32			

( $p < .05$ )\*Statistical significance

There is a statistically significant finding between teaching experience and use of IS in the self-reported English teaching efficacy scale, as shown in Table 41.

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## Summary

It was found that there is a statistical significance for gender and listening proficiency, while age group had a significant effect on IS and PTE. Education major is statistically significant in relation to SE, and teaching experience has a significant effect on IS.

## 4.4 Observations

In order to triangulate the data given by the respondents, two observations, one of a lower grade level teacher and one of a higher grade level teacher were completed. This was done to determine if the self-reported data was comparable to data gathered from observation. A description of the observations follows.

### 4.4.1 Observation 1

The first observation was with a female teacher who is between 26 and 30 years old. She has had 3 years teaching experience and holds a master degree in TESL. She is a full-time English teacher having 18 contact hours a week. The class included 36 students, aged 7-8 years old. Four to six students sat at each table. It was a large classroom and the teacher did not always see what was happening at the back tables. The walls had cabinets and windows on two sides. At the front wall there was a chalkboard and a bulletin board. The bulletin board had students work on it. The back wall had a decorated bulletin board and shelving. The English classroom had a computer and projection screen. Students came from their home room to attend this class.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher came in and the students all said, "Good afternoon, teacher." During the first part of the one-hour lesson, the class worked together. The teacher was at the front of the room giving a teacher-centered lesson. The lesson was being shown on a screen. The students were prompted to say, "What is it?" and the teacher asked the students to write A, B, or C, whichever one was correct. She then showed the correct answer. Students seemed to like this activity. Next, the teacher asked, "What's

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wrong?" showing pictures and the corresponding word, which was missing a letter. For example, words such as compute\_ and ca\_ were shown below the corresponding picture. She asked, "What is it?" The students answered together. The teacher was modeling the format of the test they would be taking in a few days. She showed different styles of questions and answers.

The next part of the lesson was set up so that students would work individually. A jumbled sentence was displayed and students were asked to write the jumbled sentence correctly. An example was: 'your name write' for 'Write your name.' Then the teacher began writing jumbled sentences spontaneously. The students liked guessing what the teacher wrote.

During the next part of the lesson the class worked together. The teacher had students come up to and tell her what day or month she had highlighted. Then she asked a table at a time to give the correct answer together. The students liked this activity and were able to read questions. They knew enough words to give answers.

This was a teacher-centered lesson, in which the students actively participated and most enjoyed it. The mean score of the teacher's self-perceived English proficiency was 4.75 (between low and mid advanced proficiency), with the observer giving a higher score for domains observed: listening and speaking. The observer, based on the observation and a short conversation afterward, rated her listening and speaking skills at at least 5.5 because she had close to native-like proficiency in those domains. The other domains were not observed. The self-reported English teaching efficacy by the teacher was: 7.85 for SE (between 'quite a bit' and 'a great deal'), 6.86 for IS (close to 'quite a bit'), and 7.33 for PTE (slightly more than 'quite a bit'). The observer rated SE at a mean average of 7.16 and IS at a mean average of 8.8 based on what was observed.

#### **4.4.2 Observation 2**

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The next observation was with the second teacher, who had a sixth grade class. It was also a review class. This teacher is female, between 26 and 30, and had 5 years teaching experience. She was teaching English for 18 hours a week. She graduated as an English major and is working on a masters degree.

The afternoon class included 30 sixth grade students. Students sat in rows. The room was orderly and clean and light. There were windows at the back of the room. The front of the room had a chalk board and bulletin boards. One bulletin board was teacher made and the other had some student work on it. Before the class began, the teacher was joking with some of the students.

The teacher had a review lesson planned. She told the class that tomorrow they would have to answer and spell, in English, 26 questions. She would only say the question and the students would have to listen carefully to be able to answer the questions. She said she would not write words or questions on the board. Then, in jest, she said, "If you don't do well you will have to wear a sign saying, 'I am a lazy girl/boy' on your shirt all day. It means you didn't pay attention in my class, it means you are lazy." The teacher asked for understanding in English and Thai. The teacher continued to joke with the students, but students did not seem to be too interested in her jokes. The focus of the lesson was: as + adjective + as. The students were not prepared and many did not know the answers to the review questions asked.

Next reading and bookwork were assigned, the teacher asked individual students to read from the book. Then the teacher asked questions and a few students would go to the board to write answers. The students seemed to enjoy going to the board but generally weren't paying too much attention and were chatting to each other in Thai if they weren't called upon. This part of the lesson lasted about 15 minutes. Students then worked in a workbook and the teacher circulated around the room checking work and helping when needed.

The teacher spoke in English a lot, but also spoke in Thai a lot considering it was an English lesson. The teacher also talked much more than students. There was very little oral practice on the part of the students. Students were heard speaking in Thai during class and only spoke in English to answer questions. The teacher had a self-perceived English proficiency score of 4.5 or low advanced proficiency, with the observer giving the same score. Self-reported English teaching efficacy by Teacher 2 was  $\bar{x}$ =5.71 for SE,  $\bar{x}$ =7.14 for IS, and 6.66 for PTE. The observer rated SE at  $\bar{x}$ =5.66 and IS at  $\bar{x}$ =6.2, which was lower than the self-rating by the teacher because the teacher was not using instructional strategies that helped students practice and learn the language to the fullest advantage.

## 4.5 Summary

This chapter discussed the demographics of the elementary school Thai English teachers, along with results of the quantitative and qualitative data gathered to answer the research questions, which were related to self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Notes and comparison data from observations gave a more detailed view of the elementary school Thai English teacher participants of this study. It was found that Thai English teachers rate their overall proficiency level at approximately 4, or high intermediate level, for the four macro skills. Results of the self-reported English teaching efficacy scale showed that the teachers believed they could do 'quite a bit' to improve student outcomes when learning English as a foreign language. In regards to research question three, there was no correlation found between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Even though there was no correlation, a more in depth look was taken of the independent variables of gender, age, education degree, education major, and years of teaching experience in relation to self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. It was found that there was statistical significance between gender and the listening domain, age and the English teaching efficacy subscales of instructional strategies and personal teaching efficacy, education major and student engagement, and teaching experience and instructional strategy use (English teaching efficacy scale).

# Chapter 5

## Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

### Introduction

This study has focused on how elementary school Thai English teachers rate their English proficiency and English teaching efficacy in order to get a better picture of the teachers' perceived proficiency level and teaching efficacy beliefs. This chapter presents a summary of the findings with discussion and conclusions. The recommendations based on these findings are provided in this chapter.

### 5.1 Summary of the study

English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers have been criticized for many years. The objectives of this research were to 1) investigate the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers, 2) investigate the self-reported English teaching efficacy beliefs of elementary school Thai English teachers, and to 3) determine if there was a correlation between the self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers. Self-assessed language proficiency has been shown to be closely correlated to professional language proficiency tests and is a valid and reliable way to assess a person's language proficiency (Mistar, 2011). The examination of teaching efficacy is based on the self-efficacy theory, which has its foundation in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Bandura believed that self-efficacy beliefs determine how much a person will persevere to accomplish an expected outcome. Mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional state are important tenets of self-efficacy, as described by Bandura (1997). The term teacher efficacy was initially used by Armor and coworkers in the



RAND study (1976, in Fives, 2003). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (1998) stated that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs relate to how they teach and outcomes attained.

This study used a mixed methods design using a quantitative survey and qualitative class observation to get more detailed information (Creswell, 2005). The quantitative part of this study was a survey questionnaire that asked elementary school Thai English teachers to include demographic information, rate their English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. Only 30 teachers of the 33 who completed the English teaching efficacy completed the English proficiency portion of the survey. Two observations were completed and analyzed qualitatively to “offer many different perspectives on the study topic and provide a complex picture of the situation” (ibid., p.510, as cited in Lee, 2009). Information was gathered that could be used by teachers, school officials, English education program directors, and Ministry of Education officials to improve the teaching of EFL in Thailand. The results of the survey were obtained by using Open Office Suite, and SPSS (v.11.5 and 17), for descriptive and correlative analysis, which helped to answer the research questions and objectives presented in Chapter 1.

The purpose of the first research question and objective was to determine the self-perceived English proficiency levels for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The elementary school Thai English teachers were asked to complete a quantitative survey instrument, which included an English proficiency self-assessment scale. This scale was an extension of the original FLOSEM (Padilla, Sung, and Aninao, 1997), with sections created by Butler (2004) to assess reading and writing proficiency, in addition to listening and speaking (oral) proficiency descriptors of the original matrix.

Using the Butler adapted self-perceived English proficiency scale, elementary school Thai teachers rated the receptive skills of listening ( $\bar{x}$ =4.12) and reading ( $\bar{x}$ =4.03) slightly higher than the productive skills of speaking ( $\bar{x}$ =3.97) and writing ( $\bar{x}$ =3.97). Based on the descriptors, provided by Padilla and Sung (1999) and Butler (2004), which are based on a continuum from 1, equating to extremely limited ability, to 6, corresponding to native-like proficiency, a score of 4 corresponds to a high intermediate proficiency level. The overall

mean average for self-perceived English proficiency in this study was 4.02, which means the respondents believed they have a good command of the language. When compared to the proficiency self-ratings results from other studies (Butler, 2004; Chacon, 2005; Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; and Lee, 2009), the elementary school Thai English teachers in this study rated themselves similarly to the Taiwanese teachers and lower than teachers in Venezuela and Iran. Thai English teachers had proficiency scores higher than teachers in Korea, Japan, and Iran. Results from other studies suggest that other countries also have teachers with low proficiency levels, but this study suggests that the elementary school Thai English teachers believe they have an overall high intermediate proficiency level.

The way in which teachers perceive their English teaching efficacy is a good indicator of how much influence they feel they have in helping students achieve learning objectives. The second research question and objective was to ascertain what the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of the elementary Thai English teachers are. Included in the survey instrument was a teaching efficacy scale, using short- and long-form questions from the TSES by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). This scale primarily measured the influence a Thai English teacher has in regards to student engagement and effectiveness of instructional strategies that are used in teaching English. Three additional questions that focused on overall confidence levels in teaching English at the current grade levels, as well as higher grade levels, and confidence in teaching other courses in Thai were added to the English teaching efficacy survey section and categorized as personal teaching efficacy.

Anderson and colleagues (cited in Henson, 2001) have reported that a teacher's sense of efficacy has an influence on students' sense of efficacy. As self-efficacy is context specific, a teacher's sense of teaching efficacy in English, for example, is important in relation to students' efficacy beliefs. Teachers with a high sense of teaching efficacy will experiment with and try different instructional methods (Guskey, 1988) and usually have more confidence in their teaching ability (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). That confidence is felt by the students, thus building their confidence in the subject area being taught.

The elementary school Thai English teachers, who responded to the survey in this study, have above average English teaching efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy. They rated themselves as having 'quite a bit' of influence in student learning of English, with an overall mean average of 7.02 out of 9 points.

The third objective of this research was to determine if there was a correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Even though a correlation was not found between overall self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy, the researcher further investigated independent variables that were perceived to be highly related to one's English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. There were correlations between some of the independent variables and English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. When comparing the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, to gender, it was found that the five males in the study rated their proficiency levels higher than the twenty five female respondents. The mean average for the males was 4.43, which is between the high intermediate and low advanced proficiency levels, while the females had a mean average of 3.94, which corresponds closely to the high intermediate level. When considering age, the 20-30 years and 50+ groups both rated themselves highly in all four domains, at mean 4.31 and 4.32, respectively, which corresponded to between high intermediate and low advanced proficiency level. The middle age groups, 31-40 and 41-50, assessing their proficiency levels lower, at 3.63 and 3.65, respectively. Those overall scores were closer to the mid intermediate range. The youngest age group (20-30 years) has most likely has been exposed to English more, possibly through required English university courses and growing up in the age of the world wide web. The middle groups, 31-40 and 41-50, may not have had university courses related to English teaching when becoming teachers. Their university years were before the updated curriculum reform in 1999. It is interesting that the 50+ age group rated themselves more highly than the other groups, considering that many of these teachers may not have had the same exposure to English. The reason may be that they have a stronger sense of commitment to learning the language than the middle groups. They most likely have more years of teaching experience and feel confident of their English teaching abilities because they are more experienced. The level of education did not have any significant influence on proficiency ratings. Teachers

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with a bachelor degree rate their overall proficiency levels ( $\bar{x}$ =3.85) only slightly lower than the master degree group ( $\bar{x}$ =4.03), with a mean variance of 0.18. The Ph.D holder rated herself at an overall score of 5.24, which is between mid- and high-advanced proficiency levels. This would suggest that this person has confidence in her language abilities. The education major did not have an influence on self-perceived English proficiency, in that both groups, non-English and English majors, alike rated themselves at a  $\bar{x}$ =4.02, or high intermediate level. The years of teaching experience a teacher has did not show statistical significance in relation to proficiency. The overall proficiency mean for each group was closely clustered with only a 0.35 variance of mean score. The highest mean average was with the group that has 4-6 years of teaching experience, followed closely by the 16+ group ( $\bar{x}$ =4.21), then 7-10 ( $\bar{x}$ =4.16), 1-3 ( $\bar{x}$ =3.88), and finally the 10-15 group ( $\bar{x}$ =3.74). Statistical analysis suggests that teaching experience does not have an influence on English proficiency levels.

In relation to gender, the females believed their English teaching efficacy (7.05) was higher than the males (6.84). A '7' on the Likert scale corresponds to the belief that they can do "quite a bit" to influence student outcomes. Female teachers self-reported the ability to engage students (6.82) and use of instructional strategies (7.01) higher than males, while males believed their PTE (7.60) to be strong, when considering the variable of age.. The oldest group, 51+, had the highest self-reported English teaching efficacy in each subscale: SE (7.33), IS (7.79), and PTE (8.11). They rated themselves between providing 'quite a bit' of influence and 'a great deal' of influence. The 20-30 and 41-50 age groups rated themselves the lowest at 6.63 each. In relation to education level, the master-level respondents had the highest overall self-rating of English teaching efficacy at  $\bar{x}$ =7.19, with the other education levels close behind at  $\bar{x}$ =6.93 for the Ph.D and  $\bar{x}$ =6.89 for the bachelor-level respondents. They were all in or extremely close to the 'quite a bit' range. Regarding education major, the non-English majors believed their English teaching efficacy ( $\bar{x}$ =7.29) to be higher than English majors ( $\bar{x}$ =6.82). When comparing teaching experience to English teaching efficacy, the 51+ age group with the most years of experience, 16+ years, rated their teaching efficacy the highest at 7.43, or having between 'quite a bit' and 'a great deal' of influence on student outcomes. The 7-10 years teaching experience group rated themselves at 7.04 ('quite a bit'),

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with 10-15 years of teaching experience at 6.94 (almost 'quite a bit'), and 1-3 and 4-6 years of teaching experience at 6.56, or between 'some' and 'quite a bit' of influence. All in all the teachers were found to have strong English teaching efficacy beliefs.

One-way analysis of variance, or ANOVA, between the five variables: gender, age, level of education, education major, and teaching experience, and English proficiency and English teaching efficacy revealed some statistically significant findings. There was a statistically significant finding (.032) between gender and the listening domain of English proficiency at  $p < .05$ , yet none for gender and English teaching efficacy. One-way ANOVA between age and self-perceived English proficiency showed not significant findings, while age and English teaching efficacy showed statistical significance in instructional strategies (.001) and personal teaching efficacy (.042). There was no significance found between education level and English proficiency or English teaching efficacy. Education major and proficiency were not significant, but education major and SE in the teaching efficacy scale showed significance at .006 between groups. Teaching experience and proficiency were not statistically significant, but IS in teaching efficacy was significant at .047 between groups.

Observations were completed to help triangulate the quantitative data gathered. Two teachers led teacher-centered lessons with different results. The teacher in the first observation (Teacher 1) has a master's degree in TESL and teaches English for 18 hours a week. The class observed had 36 students ages 7-8 who were grouped (4-6) at large tables. This teacher was able to successfully engage her students through a fun review lesson that incorporated different teaching strategies. This teacher-centered class did allow for quite a bit of student talk time. The teacher modeled the expected responses first and the students then followed with appropriate responses. She was able to engage most of the students the whole class. They enjoyed answering the questions asked. Teacher 1 rated her overall English proficiency at  $\bar{x}=4.75$  or between low and mid advanced proficiency with the observer rating the teacher at 5.5 for listening and speaking because her diction was close to that of a native speaker and she understood everything said with ease. Her self-reported English teaching efficacy in SE was 7.85, which means more than 'quite a bit' but not quite 'a great deal'; IS was 6.86, which is close to 'quite a bit'; and PTE was 7.37. As an observer, the researcher

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rated Teacher 1 with an overall proficiency at  $\bar{x}=5.5$  (only listening and speaking were assessed) and SE at  $\bar{x}=7.16$ , lower than the teacher self-rating, and IS at  $\bar{x}=8.8$ , which was higher than the teacher rated herself. Teacher 1 used instructional strategies that had the students remembering and using the words and sentences being taught.

Teacher 2 teaches English for 18 hours a week and has an English degree. She was teaching a class of 30 sixth grade students. Students were seated in rows. The room was neat and orderly. Teacher 2 used different teaching strategies but with limited success. Students did not seem to be prepared and did not participate as well as the other class that was observed. The teacher was trying to joke with the class but they did not seem to understand or be interested. In this class the teacher spoke in Thai quite a bit. She talked a lot more than the students. There was almost no oral practice among the students, only for a select few to answer questions. This could have been this way because of the nature of the lesson, a review for an exam. The self-perceived English proficiency of Teacher 2 was  $\bar{x}=4.5$ . The observer was in agreement with this, also rating the teacher at  $\bar{x}=4.5$  in listening, speaking, and writing, based on the observation. For English teaching efficacy the teacher self-rated SE at  $\bar{x}=5.71$  (between 'some influence' and 'quite a bit' of influence) and IS at  $\bar{x}=7.14$  (close to 'quite a bit' of influence), and PTE at  $\bar{x}=6.66$ . The observer rated SE at 5.66, fairly close to what the teacher rated, and IS at 6.2, less than the rating of the teacher because the strategies she used did not seem to be successful in helping the students learn and use English, based on the observation.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The objectives of this study were to determine the self-perceived English proficiency levels and self-reported English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers. It also aimed to confirm a correlation between the self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported teaching efficacy levels of the participants. This study adds to the limited research that has been completed in regards to the relationship between self-perceived language proficiency and self-reported language teaching efficacy in the EFL field. It was found that the elementary school Thai English teachers in this study rated their overall

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English proficiency level at 4 (median average), or high intermediate level. The receptive skills of listening and reading were rated the highest at 4.12 and 4.03, respectively, while both productive skills of speaking and writing were rated at 3.97. All domains were matched closely. The participants of this study rated their overall English teaching efficacy at 7 (median average), which means that they believe they can do 'quite a bit' to influence student outcomes. Their personal teaching efficacy was rated the highest at 7.37, followed by instructional strategies at 6.98 and student engagement at 6.7. While a correlation between language proficiency and teaching efficacy was not found, there were some statistically significant correlations between independent variables gender, age, education major, and teaching experience in this study. There was statistical significance between gender and listening proficiency. In regards to English teaching efficacy, it was found that age had significant differences on IS and PTE, as education major had a significant effect on SE, while teaching experience was found to significantly effect IS.

### **5.3 Discussion**

Participants in this study have taken many different types of English-related courses. They have reported taking teaching methods, language learning and theory, and professional development workshops. It was interesting that not many of the courses listed by the participants related to CLT or learner-centeredness as outlined in the new core curriculum guidelines. Where are the communicative language teaching, techniques for a learner-centered classroom, and language improvement courses? It would seem that if the Ministry of Education wants a more communicative approach to foreign language learning that they would offer courses to help train more teachers. Teachers need support through curriculum changes in the way of courses in the areas where the change is taking place. Giving teachers a place to practice English—whether it is through practical application such as speaking one-to-one or in an online-based chat forum, which could help create a good support system between teachers all over Thailand—will motivate teachers to practice and improve their English skills, consequently building their confidence in speaking English. Teachers have shown that they do like to travel abroad by the responses given in the survey. Offering an immersion-based course abroad, during the summer vacation, could also be a good

proficiency builder. However, traveling for a week or two a year is not enough to help improve communication skills. More needs to be done.

In addition to English-related classes, teachers expressed an interest in taking classes on teaching strategies and language pedagogy. They want to improve their teaching style, but will have a difficulty if there are no courses offered for them. Already Thai teachers face many obstacles in teaching, such as large class size and lack of resources. These items were listed as the top two responses for the question about hindrances to teaching. Maybe discussions, involving teachers and administrators, on ways to improve the teaching atmosphere are needed at district and national levels. At the core of all these discussions, there needs to be the recognition that something needs to be done to help improve teachers' English proficiency so that English instruction can improve also.

### **5.3.1 Self-perceived English proficiency**

In answer to research question 1, what are the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers, the findings show that the teachers rate their overall English skills at level 4, corresponding to a high intermediate level of proficiency. The results of this study show that some elementary school Thai English teachers rate themselves higher than other Asian teachers represented in other studies (Butler, 2004; Lee, 2009). South Korean, Taiwanese, and Japanese elementary school teachers (Butler, 2004) generally rate themselves lower than Thai teachers, with the exception of Taiwan in the reading domain. It is interesting to note that in all studies the respondents rated themselves higher in the receptive skills, listening and reading, and lower in the productive skills, speaking and writing. In the Butler (2004) and current study, teachers had high to low ratings in this order: listening, reading, speaking, writing. Two-thirds of the participants in the current study rated their listening skill at 4 or higher. This suggests that the teachers are more confident in their listening abilities than the other skills and is agreement with another study (ibid.). Ratings of 4 in speaking say that the teachers rate themselves quite high in comparison with reports that Thai English teachers' proficiency levels are low. These high ratings may be an indicator of teachers' proficiency levels increasing to an acceptable level for teaching. This figure is still respectable and worthy of notice. Again, when teachers



perceive themselves to have higher proficiency, they are more likely to try innovative instructional strategies and include more communicative lessons in their syllabus. Reading (4.03) and writing levels (3.97) in the current study are similar to the ratings of Taiwanese teachers for reading (4.07) and writing (3.68). The overall proficiency rating for Taiwan was 3.87, which was closest to high intermediate level, Korea was 3.03, or low intermediate level, and Japan was 2.67, between high beginner and low intermediate level (Butler, 2004). Lee's (2009) study shows that South Korean teachers rated themselves at 3.10, or closest to low intermediate, while the overall proficiency self-rating of the Thai teachers was 4.02, which correspond to high intermediate level. At high intermediate level a person can understand what is being said and speak at near normal speed and read most texts and write with relative ease, sometimes needing to consult a dictionary and making some grammatical mistakes, respectively (Butler, 2004).

What was found was that the Thai teachers have high intermediate self-assessed proficiency levels. This is a positive finding and one that needs to be recognized. Teachers are becoming more aware of the importance of their proficiency level and how it, in turn, has an effect on their students' proficiency levels. This study supports the opinion that Thai teachers proficiency levels are getting better. When proficiency continues to improve, teaching efficacy beliefs also tend to be higher. And when teaching efficacy levels are higher, teachers are more likely to take risks with their teaching. They will try to implement new teaching strategies such as CLT, which is under the Thailand curriculum guidelines, and allow for a more student-centered environment in Thailand EFL classrooms. Providing chances for mastery experiences are what is needed. Mastery experiences come from successfully using and experimenting with the language. Students need those chances to communicate in English, not just to learn the mechanics of the language. More proficient teachers are more confident and more willing to communicate in English, thus modeling the language and helping students to become more proficient by actually practicing English in the classroom. When they feel more confident with using English in the classroom, they are more likely to practice outside the classroom. These are the experiences teachers strive for.

As of yet, there is not a baseline for English proficiency levels of teachers in Thailand. The Thailand Ministry of Education would seem to be in agreement with Thomas (1987), who believes that when the level of proficiency is higher than the curriculum being taught, it should be an acceptable level for teaching in elementary school. Thomas also states that they should have 'language awareness' (p.34) or understanding of the language system being taught, as well as knowledge of teaching or pedagogical skills. These competencies are crucial to improving student outcomes. Lee (2009) found that when teachers had adequate English proficiency, they had a stronger belief in their ability to use instructional strategies and English to carry out lessons. When teachers have limited proficiency the transfer of knowledge is not as effective. It affects the students' ability to acquire the new language (Nel and Muller, 2010). The importance of teachers' language proficiency cannot be overlooked. The question of what English proficiency level do teachers need to successfully teach in Thailand still needs careful consideration. Should language teachers have to pass a proficiency assessment test to teach English? There was no literature found on the administration of an English proficiency test for Thai English teachers. That is an idea that is long overdue for consideration by the Ministry of Education. To assure that teachers have an acceptable proficiency level, support not only needs to there for the teachers by way of a strong foundation in pedagogical training in general, but also for training specific to language teaching. Additionally, teachers need to be able to practice the language to become more proficient. Opportunities for continued language acquisition are important and critical to the job.

### **5.3.2 Self-reported English teaching efficacy**

Research question two utilized data from the self-rating English teaching efficacy scale. It has been established that teaching efficacy is specific to content area. The teaching efficacy scale was divided into three subscales: student engagement (SE), instructional strategies (IS), and personal teaching efficacy (PTE). The data of the first two subscales, SE and IS, which used the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) in the EFL context and are shown in

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Scores for SE show that teachers in Iran (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) and Venezuela (Chacon, 2005) believe they are more efficacious than the Thai teachers in the present study. This could be that they are teaching at high school and middle school level, respectively, and need to be more proficient to teach at those levels. Korean elementary teachers (Lee, 2009), and middle school Iranian teachers (Mirsanjari, Karbalaei, and Afraz (2013) rated themselves in SE lower than the elementary school teachers of Thailand. The teachers in Iran (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) and Venezuelan teachers (Chacon, 2005) also rate themselves higher in IS than the Thai teachers, Korean, and middle school Iranian teachers.

The elementary school Thai English teachers perceived themselves to have higher teaching efficacy than teachers in the Lee (2009) and Mirsanjari, Karbalaei, and Afraz (2013) studies. They believed that they could have 'quite a bit of influence' whereas the respondents in the Lee (2009) and Mirsanjari, Karbalaei, and Afraz (2013) only believed they would have 'some influence'. Conversely, the high school English teachers in the Eslami and Fatahi study (2008) and middle school English teachers Chacon study (2005) overall rated themselves slightly more efficacious than the Thai teachers, who were closely rated at being able to affect 'quite a bit' of influence on students. Because teaching efficacy is related to how confident a teacher feels in their teaching abilities, these results suggest that the Thai English teachers are more confident in their English teaching abilities than Iranian (Mirsanjari, Karbalaei, and Afraz (2013) and Korean (Lee, 2009) teachers.

Elementary school Thai English teachers seem to be more confident in their use of IS than ability to engage students, yet rate themselves the highest for PTE, or belief that they have a greater influence in student outcomes than research might suggest. In fact, the questions related to English PTE had the highest overall mean score on the teaching efficacy scale. Thai English teachers are confident that their English teaching abilities and believe they are more 'quite a bit' confident at teaching English at the elementary level. This is another positive finding in this study. By having teachers who are confident in their teaching abilities, they are good models for students as well as teachers that do not have as much confidence in their own English teaching abilities. Personal teaching efficacy is what powers teachers to excel in their field. The Thai teachers also believe that their instructional

strategies could have 'quite a bit' of influence, showing confidence in their abilities. These high efficacy beliefs are displayed in the classroom and students respond positively to these beliefs (by developing positive self-efficacy beliefs themselves). This was collaborated by two classroom observations that were completed. Students were more engaged when teaching strategies were more effective. More engagement means more exposure to the language. More exposure brings more opportunities for language acquisition, which is the key to improved proficiency. During one observation, students were eager to give answers when everyone was allowed to participate. They were practicing English with the teacher and each other. In the classroom where one student was called on at a time, opportunities for communication between students and teacher did not take place.

### **5.3.3 Relationship between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy**

In regard to research question three, self-perceived English proficiency has been shown to have a positive correlation to English teaching efficacy in some studies (Chacon, 2005; Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; Lee, 2009). However, in this study, a statistically significant relationship was not found. This is consistent with findings from a study by Shim (2001, as cited in Mirsanjari, Karbalaei, and Araz, 2013) who studied the self-efficacy beliefs of middle and high school teachers in Korea. The small sample size could have been a significant factor for not seeing a statistical significance between the two, English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. Additionally, teachers' limited language acquisition pedagogy and content knowledge about language teaching could affect the way they responded to questions and explain why there was no correlation between English proficiency and English teaching efficacy.

Five independent variables, gender, age, education level, education major, and teaching experience were further investigated in relation to English proficiency and English teaching efficacy and there were statistically significant findings between gender and listening proficiency, age and IS and PTE, while education major affected SE, and teaching experience and IS were correlated.

### 5.3.4 Observations

The teachers that were observed were energetic and seemed to enjoy teaching. In a short interview after the observation, one teacher commented on how supportive the school administration was. They supported professional development and wanted their teachers to continually improve their teaching strategies. The government school had a good feel to it, it was a warm environment. Their classrooms were inviting places. The students were happy and student work was proudly display throughout the school. The teachers provided lessons using different teaching strategies to keep students engaged.

### 5.4 Limitations of the study

The small sample size is the greatest limitation of this study. Findings cannot be generalized to the population. It has been suggested that a correlation was not found because of the sample size. The findings are also based on self-reported data, which can be restrictive in itself. Another possible limitation is that teachers may have scored themselves according to what they thought was the best, reasonable answer due to peer and cultural pressure. With the relative consistency of the scores, that does not seem to be the case. Additionally, it is advisable to further investigate the findings by additional qualitative studies that focus on observing the teachers to collaborate their self-assessments.

### 5.5 Implications

Based on the findings, elementary school Thai English teachers are more proficient than studies may suggest and they report that they have relatively high teaching ability. These results are based on self-assessed reports and need to be substantiated with formal observational studies to confirm the information gathered in this report. Because teaching efficacy is domain specific, and teaching efficacy relates to student achievement, teachers would benefit from more focused professional development programs. Moreover, the participants stated that they would like more professional training. Needs analyzes need to be completed to understand teachers specific needs in order to create programs and professional development courses that match those needs.

Education programs need to change or implement new courses that focus on improving teacher efficacy by providing training in CLT and a more learner-centered approach to teaching. Segovia and Hardison (2009) and others (Punthumasen, 2007) support training of teachers in the learner-centered approach, something that is unfamiliar to many Thai teachers. Standards for acceptable proficiency levels are needed produce more qualified language teachers. Teachers of EFL need programs and courses in listening, speaking, reading, and writing to prepare them in all aspects of language teaching.

## 5.6 Recommendations

Implementation of change takes time. Changing from a teacher-centered environment to a learner-centered one, where more communication practice takes place, is happening in Thailand slowly, but surely. Elementary school Thai English teachers are improving their proficiency levels. They are incorporating CLT into the classroom on their own terms. To increase the rate of CLT in the classroom, more training needs to take place. Teachers, traditionally teach how they were taught. This type of teaching is not right for language learning and needs to change; and the only way it is going to change is by offering considerable training and additional support to the teachers during the transition phase. The beliefs that teachers have about teaching and learning can affect how they adapt to changing approaches to teaching (Bolitho, n.d.). By providing teachers with professional development opportunities to learn more about CLT and student-centered classroom environments, more students will benefit.

Thai English teachers would benefit by continuing to improve their English proficiency, participating in professional development programs, talking to other English speakers at every opportunity, and traveling to English-speaking countries for language immersion. Requesting professional development in language teaching pedagogy, CLT, and learner-centered approaches would assist in the transition to a more learn-centered classroom. Students would be the ultimate beneficiaries of this professional development. Students' participation in a communicative English class would provide practical application of the language, which would, in turn, enhance proficiency at an increased rate. The use of kinesthetic learning, with more physical response has been shown to improve retention and

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would be advantageous to incorporate into the classroom (Asher, 1969). More communicative tasks such as role plays and using more authentic language from media and technology would help students see and experience how English in daily lives is important. These activities engage the students; they have to actually use the language to complete the tasks. The Ministry of Education would do well to offer more support to teachers by offering professional development and encouraging them to participate. Further review of the curriculum to evaluate its effectiveness may be beneficial. Developing and establishing baseline English proficiency standards, and instituting standardized language proficiency tests for teachers who teach other languages than Thai, would help to produce more qualified English teachers. An evaluation of the courses taught in teacher education programs for English teachers would help to make programs, thus courses, more effective. Matching the program to the communicative-based curriculum guidelines could advance English teaching effectiveness also. Training programs could empower teachers to continue to improve their English skills, which will be a step toward raising the teachers' sense of English teaching efficacy. Empowered teachers can then foster empowered students; and empowered students will be more prepared to successfully compete in the ASEAN community as well as other international communities.

More importantly, students need to see English being modeled in everyday life so that they can see and understand the connection to learning another language. Teachers could talk to each other in English in the halls and public places at school. The principal could model speaking English also. Another suggestion would be for the national leaders to model English through public service announcements and written communications. Newspapers could introduce an English learning section in the paper as other countries have done. The researcher saw newspapers in Korea that had a page devoted to English practice. When students see role models speaking English, they will start speaking English too.

Further studies are recommended to determine the effectiveness of teaching English at all grade levels. Observational studies, which include interviews that assess teachers' use of communicative strategies and the evaluation of the learn-centered classroom would also be beneficial.

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## Voice of Agony:

### A Study of the Novels of Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande

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#### Abstract

With the woman on the margin and at the receiving end to bear the brunt of society and its ills of difficult and dangerous relationships, the novels by Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande give a fascinating account of grim reality that the disadvantaged, the affected and the oppressed feel compelled to suffer. In her novels, Anita Desai vigorously explores the theme of rootlessness, alienation, anxiety, domestic disharmony, interpersonal relationships and patriarchal dominance in traditional Indian families. With her tremendous dexterity and proven skills, she charts a new territory for switching her focus from the external to the internal psychic reality. She succeeds in delving deep into protagonists' mental struggle resulting in their severe

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stress and strain. In the wake of her efforts to carry out characters' psychological analysis, most of her protagonists make constant endeavour to define their relations to themselves vis-à-vis human relationships with others, taking into account the mental dilemma and innermost psyche of emotional troubles. On the other hand, Shashi Deshpande holds the mirror up to the Indian middle class life without any exaggeration, deliberately oblivious of the western audience and critics, or commercial success. She deals in rigorous detail in her novels with human relationships, its bondage, the emotional roller coaster and the struggles and ways to overcome them. Unlike Desai, Deshpande focuses, in particular, on middle class women, peculiar Indian house wives and career-oriented women. More often than not, the novels of Deshpande center around typical Indian joint families, importance of relationships in a family and marriage, and also detached or dysfunctional family relationships. She not only gives descriptions of urban middle class family, but also analyses in depth those families that grapple with poverty, struggle for existence, and hardly manage to lead a normal life. However, both of them paint the bleak picture of the Indian woman, which serves as a timely reminder to those at the helm, to respond to the concerned voice of agony.

### **Anita Desai and Her Works**

Anita Desai, one of the major stalwarts among Indian English novelists, was born of a Bengali father, D. N. Mazumdar, a businessman and a German mother, Toni Nime in Mussori on June 24, 1937. As a prolific and promising figure in novel writing, she has carved out a niche for herself in Indian English Literature. From childhood, she showed her creative talent. At the age of seven, she struck a literary spark of creative writing, and published her first story as a small piece of art in a children's magazine at nine. The feminine voices of the desolate Indian women find their echo in her writings. She, nominated three times for Man Booker Prize, has been considered to be one of the most brilliant novelists in Indian English Literature since 1960s.

Anita Desai had her schooling at Queen Mary's secondary school and a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Delhi University in 1957. Then she got married to Ashwin Desai, a man with a booming business. A mother of four children, she went ahead with her writing spree, producing novels of remarkable merit, almost as if in a sequence. The stupendous

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achievements in her writings earned her many accolades. A Visiting Fellow at Colleges like Smith, Mount Holyoke, Girton College and Cambridge University in 1986, she became a member of the advisory board for English for the National Academy of Letters in Delhi, known as The Sahitya Akademi which awarded Desai its top Prize in 1979. She added new feathers in her cap from time to time. Being appointed as first Professor of Writing in English for more than twenty years by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, becoming Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, being designated as a Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, being nominated for the prestigious Booker Prize for three times and being honored with the 'Padma Shri' award by India, are some of the incredible honors that she can really be proud of.

As against such milestones, she had some hard times in the 1960s when she started her career as a novelist with no room of her own, nor any publishers at her side to bring out her works. The creative works which create a distinct space for her are *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), *Voices in the City* (1965), *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* (1971), *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *The Village By The Sea* (1982), *In Custody* (1984), *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1987), *Journey to Ithaca* (1995) and *Fasting, Feasting* (1999), *The Zigzag Way* (2004), and *The Artist of Disappearance* (2011).

### **Desai as a Champion of Women's Sensibility**

With an intensive study of Anita Desai's works, one can see that she mounts a fierce onslaught against patriarchal cultural pattern and the arrogance of the privileged dominant masculine gender, advocating ferociously for female autonomy at the same time. In her novels, she vigorously explores the theme of rootlessness, alienation, anxiety, domestic disharmony, interpersonal relationships and patriarchal dominance in traditional Indian families. With her tremendous dexterity and proven skill, she charts a new territory for switching her focus from the external to the internal psychic reality of her characters. She succeeds in delving deep into the protagonists' mental struggle resulting in severe stress and strain.

Dr. Swain mentions, “Critics like Solanki and Sharma have often observed that Desai’s protagonist is a psychologically fragmented individual who relies chiefly on indirect methods of coping with stress situations which ventilate through various survival strategies. Escape, withdrawal and denial of reality seem to be prominent primitive survival strategies among Desai’s protagonists.” (Images of Alienation. 170)

Like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, Anita Desai makes a foray into human nature and human relationship from a psychological stand point. Earlier women novelists, including Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Jhabwala and Nayantara Sahagal never touched on the psychic issues of trials and tribulations of contemporary women as done by Desai. Representing ‘the creative release of feminine sensibility’, Desai’s women are mostly from the affluent class, not ordinary, nor on the bread line.

In an attempt to reveal the struggle of the soul and inner self, Desai has recourse to the same technique as used in the works of Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson, D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner. Desai deals with inner disturbance, contradictions, predicaments and the forces of antagonism constantly at work in the imaginative sensibility of woman. These techniques are suited to deal with thoughts, emotions and sensations at various levels of consciousness.

The stream of consciousness technique and flashback methodology have been extensively used in her novels, which very few novelists employed at the time. “Desai’s novels can be analyzed taking into consideration the psychological motivations of her novels as psychic drama through flashback, diary-entries, self-analysis, ruminations, rumbling of dialogues and descriptions of places and people.” (V. Singh 247)

Prof. Srinivasa Iyengar also observes:



“Since her pre-occupation is with the inner world of sensibility rather than the outer world of action, she has tried to forge a style supple and suggestive enough to convey the fever and fretfulness”

In her debut novel, *Cry, the Peacock*, she clears the ground for psychological explorations in Indian English novels. *Cry, The Peacock* focuses on the psychological trauma of Maya who is haunted constantly by the creeping fear of death, as was the prophesy of the albino astrologer. As though to overcome it, she loves Goutama, her husband, passionately and expects the same in return. But, the rationalistic approach of her husband puts a damper on her spirit and on the whole flirts dangerously with her life.

*Voices in the City*, the second novel, deals with the theme of social alienation, and alienation and estrangement in the relationship of husband and wife. Having no mutual liking, the couple harbours animosity towards each other for no apparent reason.

“When he came to Kalimpong and saw her wandering about her garden, touching her flowers, he never followed her. He used to lie back against his cushions, idle and contended - contended I think, in his malice.” (*Voices in the City* 207)

Desai’s third novel, *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* makes a comprehensive analysis of immigrant lives in England, marked by the fluid identity of rootlessness or the in-between condition.

Desai tries to look into the root cause of a failing marriage. According to her, marriage reaches its bitter end on account of incompatible union - men are more rational and women more emotional and sentimental - and the shattering of the rainbow dream of a woman’s blissful, happy married life.

“The hypocrisy of the institution of marriage is increasingly taking the shape of a dead albatross around the necks of the modern, emancipated, self -respecting women.” (Bannerjee123).

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It is a business transaction rather than an institution.

Nanda Kaul, the protagonist of the novel, *Fire on the Mountain* stands for the trauma and agonizing experience of an Indian house wife, which in turn leaves her inner stability in shambles. She bears with her husband just for the sake of obligations; otherwise, she is starkly aware of the reality: “Not that her husband loved and cherished her and kept her like a queen - he had only done enough to keep her quiet, while he carried on a lifelong affair with Miss David, the mathematics mistress whom he had not married, because she was a Christian, but whom he had loved all his life.” (*Fire on the Mountain* 145)

In the wake of her efforts to carry out characters’ psychological analysis, most of her protagonists constantly endeavour to define their relations to themselves. She deals with human relationships, taking into account the mental dilemma and innermost psyche of the characters’ emotional troubles. In *Fire on the Mountain*, Anita Desai immaculately formulates the delicate dynamics of the human relationships of three women, in an intricate narrative structure. In the words of Dr. Atma Ram, “Whereas a man is concerned with action, experience and achievement, a woman writer is more concerned with thought, emotion and sensation”

Desai discussed at length the furies of women, and articulated the feminine voice for emancipation and empowerment. B. Ramachandra Rao is justified to say: “Each novel of Mrs. Desai is a masterpiece of technical skill”, (62) so as to express the angst and animosity of women. Her characterization is as equally important as plot construction. Prof. K.R S. Iyengar calls her work “original tales” and admires her skills in both inventing and narrating the stories.

Clear Light of the Day deals with the life of two sisters Bimla and Tara from a loveless home. Bimla’s Hobson’s choice to look after her mentally retarded younger brother, after her parents’ death, gives a clear insight into the maze of worries and sufferings a woman with such a responsibility has to undergo. It is also replete with maladjustments in relationships leading to

loveless marriages. The marriage of Tara and Bakul is an advantageous marriage, but not the best kind of marriage.

Desai lends new vision and value to the Indian novel by subjecting her characters to rigorous self-analysis and self-introspection, in order to redefine and re-discover themselves. The young men very often are up in arms against valued systems represented by traditions and customs and their own families, while the women are susceptible to spiritual struggles of being at constant war with themselves.

*Where shall we go this Summer?* echoes the feminine sensibility by probing the inner psyche of Sita, the central character. Aggressive and non-compromising, Sita is married to Raman. The maladjustment between Raman and Sita, the emptiness of the marriage, and Sita's state of neurosis is due to the bitter monotony of her daily life and lack of her active involvement. "Life had no periods, no stretches. It simply swirled around, muddling and confusing, leading nowhere". (*Where shall we . . .*: 155) Besides, the relationship takes a hit as a consequence of her aggression and fiery temper as 'her fire had turned on him and even on the children, he felt her spite and ill temper. (*Where shall we . . .*135) "Anita Desai not only explores and portrays the feminine psyche of a common woman, but also of the subnormal bordering on abnormal women. These are the women who because of various factors are under so much of mental stress that they cannot be called insane, but then certainly they are not. She is unable to face the ordinary realities". (Gopal 5)

Reminiscent of Rama and Sita in *The Ramayana*, Sita and Raman are ironical names. Desai faithfully represents the modern Indian woman who strenuously objects to oppressive traditions and the conventional mode of life.

Through visual details and impressionistic style, she manages to give utterance to varied layers of underlying meaning in everyday behavior and objects.

The relationship of man and woman is a recurring subject in the novels of 1980s. Suffering utter isolation, the women were deeply involved in a wistful longing for love and communion which they imagine to be ‘the panacea for the ills of the world.’ However, the intense suffering is due to their failure to have emotional contact and investment, or failing in their attempts to elicit response, or understanding from the spouses,, or escape from the hostile atmosphere.

Even as an extensive study of Indian upper middle-class culture, *Fasting Feasting* sketches the life in an Indian family consisting of the parents, their children Uma, Aruna and Arun. With its focus on Uma’s claustrophobic feminine existentialism and humiliation, after futile attempts to set up an arranged marriage for her, the novel has a heart-breaking plot. Being at the beck and call of her parents, Uma, unmarried, unappreciated and treated as a domestic drudge, is always on the move, to sacrifice herself for her brother and for her home, admitting that she sometimes thinks of breaking off the shackles of responsibility.

Desai never loses sight of a person who suffers, because of the un-fulfillment of his/her mission in life. *In Custody* recounts the harrowing experience of Deven, a Hindi lecturer who has to receive a catalogue of failures; his wife is disgruntled about him, the students have scant regard for him and everyone around him takes undue advantage of him.

Unlike other works, *The Zigzag Way* sets a different tone with its setting in Mexico in a dramatic departure from her familiar ground. Anita Desai tracks and presents a graphic representation of the man-woman relationship in a miner’s family.

The examination of solitude and human frailties is the focal point in her latest work *The Artist of Disappearance*. The thematic aspect of this is that “new book are decay and disappointment, retreat and regret, so that choice seems highly appropriate” (Rohter). This is a “new volume, a trio of linked novellas about the art world, is also a sequence of underground detonations, culminating in a physical explosion that tears apart a mountain – and at a stroke

demolishes the 21st-century's corrupt linkage between art and celebrity". (Gee) It has the apocalyptic vision of Fire on the Mountain.

Desai plunges headlong into her characters' psyche to depict the roller coaster of emotions and inner struggles, triggered out of loneliness, alienation, pessimism and mental desolation. And with her three novels in the 70s, she was phenomenal. Meenakshi Mukherjee sums up Desai's position among the Indian woman novelists in the following words:

Another Indo-Anglian novelist whose distinctive style and intensely individual imagery deserves mention is Anita Desai. She is a comparatively young writer who has written only three novels so far, but already her style shows a strong individuality. Her language is marked by three characteristics: sensuous richness, a high-strung sensitiveness, and a love for the sound of words. (Mukherjee 179) With the passage of time, her spectacular writings won her tremendous laurels.

M. K. Naik appreciates Desai's contributions in these words:

Anita Desai unravels the tortuous involutions of sensibility with subtlety and finesse; and her ability to evoke the changing aspects of Nature matched with human moods is another of her assets, though her easy mastery of the language and her penchant for image and symbol, occasionally result in preciously and overwriting. If her fiction is able to advance from the vision of 'aloneness' as a psychological state of mind, that of alienation as a metaphysical enigma - as one hopes it will - Anita Desai may one day achieve an amplified pattern of significant exploration of consciousness comparable to Virginia Woolf at her best (Naik 254).

Desai's portrayal of young women with their predicaments marks a new era in Indian English Literature. Naik is apt to draw a parallel between Desai and Woolf. Her exceptional talent, though, lies in detailed sketches of her characters' mental agony owing to marital discord,

and their firm resolve, which very often failed, to seek better partners so as to fulfill their heart's desire.

### **Shashi Deshpande and Her Works**

Among the contemporary novelists, Shashi Deshpande enjoys enormous popularity with an influential role in women's writings. She wins considerable amount of fame in short story and children's writings as well. Born to a Kannada writer and Sanskrit scholar, Adya Rangchar in 1938, she is an avid reader. Her father wrote plays of ideas and was known as Bernard Shaw of Kannada Theatre. She had her graduation in Economics from Elphinstone College, Mumbai and earned a degree of law from the Government Law College, Bangalore. In addition, she completed her Masters in English from Mysore University and did a course of journalism from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai that paved the way for her prolific writing. As a widely-read person, she did not like to identify herself with any specific group either from India or abroad, she ushered in an era of peculiar woman's writings in her fictional debut in the 1970s. Deshpande has eleven novels, six collections of stories, four books for children and a screen play to her credit. This gives a clear indication of her significant contribution to the contemporary women's writing in India.

After the birth of her two sons, she made her literary debut with a collection of short stories, *The Legacy* in 1978. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, published in 1980 was her first attempt in novel writing. After a novella in between, she brought out her second novel *Roots and Shadows* in 1983. It won her the prize of Thirumathi Rangammal for the best Indian novel of 1982-83. In 1988, *That Long Silence*, a remarkable novel achieving a milestone, was published. It bagged for Deshpande the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award (National Academy of Letters) in 1990, accounting for its translation into a number of languages including German, Russian, Dutch and Danish. For her outstanding contribution to Indian writing in English, she won Padma Shri award in 2009. Her other novels are *The Binding Vine*(1993), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1993), *A Matter of Time* (1996), *Small Remedies* (2000), *The Stone Women* (2000), *In the Country of Deceit* (2008), and *Shadow Play* (2013). *The Nightingale and Intrusion and Other Stories* was published in the year 1993. Her novels are also included in the literary curriculum in

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foreign universities. She says “There are three things in my early life that have shaped me as a writer. These are: that my father was a writer, that I was educated exclusively in English and that I was born a female.” (Of Concern, Of Anxieties 107)

### **Women ‘s Angst and Anguish in Deshpande’s Novels**

Deshpande holds the mirror up to the Indian middle class life. She paints a true picture of the ordinary middle class without any exaggeration, deliberately oblivious of the western audiences and critics, or commercial success. In sharp opposition to her contemporaries who present woman from their perspective, based on their interests, she deals in minute detail in her novels with human relationships, its bondage, emotional roller-coasters, struggles and ways to overcome them.

Nayantara Sahgal, Shobhaa De and Namita Gokhale lay their thrust on upper class society which is modern in outlook and fashionable in taste. The woman characters, projected by these novelists do not believe in traditional values, nor do they respect morality and social norms. With their unorthodox views and attitude, they are a rebel group, advocating and enjoying extramarital relationship or premarital sex, paying no heed to the repercussions, however dangerous. Anita Desai, in her novels discusses at length the relationship between husband and wife who can hold sway over the other characters. Be that as it may, Deshpande focuses, in particular, on middle class women, peculiar Indian house wives and career oriented women. More often than not, the novels of Deshpande center on typical Indian joint families, showing the importance of relationship in a family and marriage, and also depicting detached or dysfunctional family relationships. She not only gives descriptions of the urban middle class family, but also analyses in depth those families that grapple with poverty, struggle for existence, and hardly manage to lead a life. The norms of respectability and sophistication are a new coinage in the dictionary of their life. She also examines the mental instability of educated women who rely heavily on their husbands, or the male counterparts to make choices and take decisions.

Deshpande's novels deal in fastidious detail with the social milieu and cultural matrix of varied complex relationships. In her novels, the young and the old get entangled in the world of transition followed by new moorings and guidelines. The young are in the process of redefining and rediscovering their role and relationships with the multiple social systems. B. Kar and U. Kaushal say, "Her novels are mainly introspective, and individual's quest for a personal meaning in life becomes the crux of her works. She also explores the anguish and conflicts of modern educated Indian women who are caught between tradition and modernity but constructively try to attain their individualistic desires in life." (Kar and Kaushal 53)

Jane Austen exercised profound influence on Deshpande, when it comes to the treatment of family crisis and its impact on the younger generation. The impact of modernization in the last decades has triggered new changes in the social systems. Marriage underwent a sea change amounting to various upheavals in women's marital status. The adversity, frustration, bitterness, subjugation and disgust, experienced by woman, became the central theme in Deshpande's work. The human relationships between human beings as brother and sister, mother and daughter, father and daughter and above all between husband and wife have been presented by her with great ingenuity. In the words of Renganathan, "The underlying theme in Shashi Deshpande's novels is human relationships, especially the ones that exist between father and daughter, husband and wife and also between mother and daughter" (Renganathan 72).

Deshpande sheds light on the loss and loneliness, defeat and despair of a young woman due to her marriage going on the rocks. Her protagonists are educated young women. Despite their education and good upbringing, the women suffer at the hands of their husbands, who represent the norms of the male dominated society and shackles of traditional orthodoxy. In the words of Y.S. Sunita Reddy, "She gives us a peep into the state and condition of the present day woman who is intelligent and articulate, aware of her capabilities, but thwarted under the weight of male chauvinism." (Reddy 146)

Most of her central characters, Indu in *Roots and Shadows*, Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terror*, and Jaya and Devyani are caught on the horns of a dilemma. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

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analyses the struggle of a woman who suffers the bitterness of a family that shows greater preference to the male child. Saru, the protagonist goes through horrendous experience of blatant gender discrimination in her family that drives 'her into a schizophrenic state of mind'(Singh 391). She had been constantly paying a heavy price for her brother's untimely death, listening to her mother's words "Why didn't you die? Why are you alive and he dead?" (19)

*If I Die Today* and *Come Up Be Dead* deal with the social issues of women's education, economic independence and motherhood. In *If I Die Today*, a short story turned novel, Manju, in spite of her honesty and straightforwardness, falls into disarray, once her married life is fraught with the danger of silence and misunderstandings that raise her eyebrows at the institution of marriage with 'fear and anxiety gnawing at her heart'(Swain 42). She thinks,

"A marriage you start off expecting so many things. And bit-by-bit like dead leaves, the expectations fall off. But the two people who have shut themselves off in two separate glass jars who can see each other but can't communicate? Is this marriage?" (*If I Die Today* 24)

*Roots and Shadows* pictures Indu lying on the horns of dilemma between family and profession and between traditions and freedom of expressions. In a bid to play the roles of a true daughter, wife and mother, she fails to achieve her complete individual self. Besides, her marriage with Jayant curtails her freedom, her self-identity is at stake, and her individuality is put in serious jeopardy. She admits, "Once when I left home as a young girl, and the second time, when, once again I left the family and returned to Jayant. Both times I found out how wrong I was. New bonds replace the old; that is all" (*Roots and Shadows* 36)

Urmi in *The Binding Vine*, Sumi, in *A Matter of Time* Madhu in *Small Remedies* and Manjari, in *Moving On*, are in a dire predicament at some point of time through no fault of their own. Deshpande's tenth novel, *In the Country of Deceit* gives an account of Devayani, a modern

woman who follows her instinct of love and passion, at the expense of her reputation for a man like Ashok, a father of a ten year old daughter.

When it comes to her latest novel, *Shadow Play*, ‘a book that explores relationships, societal norms, gender, identity and change, she says, “It all comes down to universal themes that lead back to people. Human beings are extremely complex. As an author, I need to show the complexity — that is the beginning of novel writing.”

In *That Long Silence* Jaya realizes she was at risk because of Mohan who tried to play a dominating role all the time. Her unquestioning attitude in effect proves dangerous for her life.

In some novels, the roles of fury and destiny are played out as main themes around which Deshpande weaves her tale. Deshpande explains the role of fury in her words,

“I thought of Puradars’s line, the hour strikes and I was terrified. I stopped believing in the life I was leading; suddenly it seemed unreal to me and I know I could not go on. ” (Gunjan 129)

Thus Deshpande’s novels scrupulously highlight a realistic picture of the inner sufferings, inconsolable cries and the deep disappointments of women in society. S.P Swain says:

“The novels of Sashi Deshpande are a realistic portrayal of the Indian middle- class educated women. Deshpande successfully presents these women as they are engaged in the complex and difficult social and psychological problem of defining authentic self. She delineates them with their variegated swings of mood, the ebb and flow of joy and despair.” (Swain 39)

Deshpande’s novels take into account the clash between tradition and modernity, and between constancy and experimentation. The young character mounts an uphill battle against age

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old tradition, entrenched social norms, customs and usages and patriarchal values, showing bitter angst and repugnance towards adverse circumstance. Deshpande's novels can be treated as a quest for women's fulfillment. Thus Naik rightly says:

“The most outstanding woman novelist of the period is Shashi Deshpande, the overarching theme in whose work is woman's quest for fulfilment and then she is thwarted at every stage by the forces of custom and tradition” (Naik 211).

Deshpande is one of the serious Indian English novelists, who has faithfully portrayed the realistic account of Indian woman, in particular, the life of middleclass woman, although she steadfastly refuses to be branded as a feminist in her interviews and public speeches . She has just advanced the cause of woman. In one of her interviews, she emphasizes:

I am a feminist in the sense that, I think, we need to have a world which we should recognize as a place for all of us human beings. I fully agree with Simone de Beauvoir that, “the fact that we are human, is much more important than our being men and women.” I think that is my idea of feminism. (Pathak 224)

Thus G.S Amur rightly observes “Women's struggle in the context of contemporary Indian society, to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother and, most important of all, as human being, is Shashi Deshpande's major concern as a creative writer” (Amur 10).

Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande have indeed sharpened their observation of life and added a psychological depth to their writings to listen to the voice of agony and redress the genuine grievances of the oppressed. Breaking new ground for the younger generation of Indian women novelists, they offer insights, a wealth of understanding, layers of meaning, basis for discussion and food for thought and introspection. Naik's perception is quite appropriate in this regard:

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The 'new' women novelists naturally share most of the preoccupations of their male counterparts, though in spite of what fanatical feminists would claim, they do have 'a room of their own' in the fictional mansion, in terms of certain pressing concerns and attitude towards them. (210)

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## Conflict Management: Resolving Conflict and the Need to Confront

Steven Eliason

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### Confronting – Cross-cultural Differences

People in the Western nations often use confrontation as the major technique to assert themselves as well as to resolve conflict. On the other hand, I have noticed that in Asia and even among Asians in the United States, confrontation is only done if all else fails. In fact, many may not ever confront others with their own points of view.

### Resolving Conflict versus Need to Confront

Apart from the above, there is also a significant difference between resolving conflict and the need to confront. Conflict resolution is needed to deal with disagreement on issues.

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Differences turn into conflict when involved parties feel threatened by the loss of something valuable. Confrontation is only needed when one is clearly sinning or behaving in a way that offends or hurts another – but even that should be prefaced by some careful communication. The lessons that we work so hard on perfecting in the cross-cultural settings can also be applied in non-cross-cultural ways with family, co-workers and teammates.

### **My Course on Teams**

Two expressions from a course I teach on Teams apply when managing conflict: “If we always agree, one of us is unnecessary” and, “If we always disagree, both of us are unnecessary.” Because it is actually in the healthy resolution of conflict that progress is made, it shouldn’t be feared or avoided.

The value imparted in the course as described above may be acceptable to a Western audience. I need to check whether such views will hold good in other cultures.

At the same time, we also need to remember that international diplomacy will force all nations to develop such attitudes in their effort to resolve conflicts across nations.

### **Seven Core Beliefs**

Ken Williams of International Training Partners, a ministry which provides biblical training for Christians serving across cultures has designed a workshop with the title “Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills.” It is a workshop designed to help individuals deal with several aspects of interpersonal relationships, one of which includes conflict management. Seven core beliefs were listed, most of which are also mentioned in other readings on the subject. I give below these seven statements and use them as an outline for my reflection on the subject in this article.

### **Conflict Is Normal in Close Relationships**



First, “Conflict is normal in close relationships.” Differences are necessary for synergy. Synergy is the benefit that healthy working relationships create. Some fear conflict, but the only real danger is the manner which we handle them. Conflicts do not have to be destructive, and can actually draw people together. But leaders must understand that **THEY** are fundamentally responsible to see that conflict is handled properly. We must not pull the “God’s chosen authority” trump card whenever there’s a conflict. You will be missing the opportunity God is giving you to be a better team and a better leader. This doesn’t mean that conflict should be common, but that it does happen, and shouldn’t be viewed as a sign of dysfunction or feared as a sign of a broken relationship.

### **Healthy Relationships can’t be Built on Compromise – Collaboration Is the Key**

Second, “Healthy relationships can’t be built on a 50-50, absolute compromise philosophy.”

This is really just organized passivity. It pathetically tolerates disagreement and doesn’t bring resolution to the conflict. 50-50 might work on some issues (like splitting a pizza), but it can’t be standard operating procedure for us. There is no guarantee that the compromises worked out today will hold good for tomorrow and beyond. New interests and situations and new players on the field bring more potential for conflict and we may never be able to devise compromise all the time.

Collaboration is the ideal solution when facing conflict and relates to the nature and quality with which people work together. It goes beyond cooperation, which is simply a willingness to combine effort for a collective result. Collaboration involves submission, a willingness to learn as well as to give, a willingness to trust one another, to grant permission to the other and receive permission from the other in order to achieve what would otherwise be individually unachievable. A remedy to disagreement will likely mean at least a partial surrender of your own preference for the benefit of the group. Collaboration is **NOT** passive /aggressive compromise.

## **A Commitment to Honesty**

Third, “A commitment to honesty is essential.” This means openness to the point of personal vulnerability at times. We must not be dishonest, but in our honesty we mustn’t be rude either, because this further complicates the situation and communication. Lovingly and clearly, to the best of your ability, express yourself. Allow the other to ask clarifying questions so the points of contention can be identified. The other side of honesty is a willingness to listen to others when we disagree or are personally challenged. To resolve conflict, it is crucial to be committed to being guileless without being rude or insensitive. Trust cannot be built or rebuilt without it.

## **High Stress Lowers Our Tolerance for Conflict**

Fourth, “High stress lowers our tolerance for conflict.” This is wonderfully expressed by the saying, “It was the straw that broke the camel’s back.” Be aware of stress and its effects, recognizing the weakness that one or both parties might be operating under. Don’t attempt to deal with major conflicts while in stress overload; sometimes retreating is good strategy, and this is not the same as passivity. “Retreat”, as a military term, doesn’t admit defeat, but honestly assesses the situation and realizes that a temporary loss of territory may be necessary to accomplish the ultimate victory. I think Satan does this in each of our lives as a form of deception. Tension reduces flexibility, and resolving conflict demands flexibility.

## **Spiritual Resources Are Vital**

Fifth, “Spiritual resources are vital.” Our conflicts generally take place in the realm of the mind, the way we think about something. In fact, I’d say be wary of turning it into a spiritual issue until the truth is known about the participants and the circumstances related to the conflict. Immediately turning it into spiritual warfare is a cop out if we haven’t used our minds to address the truth factor. So we need to ask ourselves the question, “Could we agree on someone we both trust to provide counsel?” Alternative perspectives can bring much needed clarity, and keeps the issue the issue, not the people involved.

But the Spirit is never disengaged, so another question might need to be asked: “Could there be something I need to repent of?” We must assess our behavior to be sure we’re not hindering the Spirit. We, ourselves, can often be the biggest barrier to resolution because we’re not imitating Jesus. Don’t jump into spiritual warfare until you’ve addressed the first order of battle, which is the war within.

Although use of the word Spiritual may not be acceptable to atheists and agnostics, they also will be able to use terms such as internal scrutiny, mind-deliberation, seeking truth, etc.

### **Managing Methods Vary with Cultures**

Sixth, “Managing methods vary with cultures.” Most cultures use mediators for issues that Westerners would normally deal with themselves. Mediation may be misused. Yet mediation at various levels, village, social group, etc. has been the preferred mode of dealing with disputes for many cultures. On the other hand, confronting based on some interpretation of Matthew 18:15-17 is widely encouraged and cultivated in the Western nations: "15 If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

Sadly, Westerners often pride themselves in more completely following the Matthew 18 passage concerning reconciliation, but this is really not the point of this section. If the conflict is with someone of another culture, we must learn how conflicts are normally handled in their culture. This is a good lesson to ask about right away in your language and cultural studies, before you have to practice it!

If the conflict is with a compatriot, beware of assumptions. It’s easy to forget what cultural hat you’re wearing, and you may overdo it and come across like an especially annoying American (or an especially confusing one if you’re acting like a national). Our methods may

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need to be adjusted to account for the degree of bonding one has with the host culture. Even within the same culture, conflicts can be dealt with in completely different ways by individual families so awareness of these differences should be noted and included in the conflict resolution process.

### **Disagreements Can Be an Opportunity to Build One Another Up!**

Finally, the seventh statement related to conflict resolution is “Disagreements can be an opportunity to build one another up.” Draw attention to that which you agree on, because chances are there are more of those anyway. Seek for the greater issues that may exist beyond the specific disagreement. Those are the ones to really watch for, because those are the ones that break up relationships.

### **Many Ways to Resolve Conflicts!**

There are many ways to resolve conflicts. But we must understand that conflicts may have many underlying factors such as internal psychological factors, religious beliefs, sectarian misunderstanding, denominational rivalry, economic interests, social status including caste divisions imposed at birth, regional rivalries, etc. Modern life is full of conflicts, both inherited and newly created. Conflict creates stress. Conflict generates anger. Conflict may lead to killing and suicides, etc. Resolution and management of conflict must become our priority in every walk of life.

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## The relationship between Family Upbringing Patterns and Deviant Behavior among the Talented Students in the City of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia

Muhammed Ali Hassan Al-Zahrani, Ph.D. Candidate

Muhammad Zuri Bin Ghani, Ph.D.

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### Abstract

The present study aims to identify the nature of the relationship between patterns of family upbringing and the deviant behavior among the talented students in the city of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. The study has been applied to the talented students in the age (13-15) years and to their parents. A scale of family upbringing patterns and a scale of behavioral deviations have been developed in order to achieve the study objectives. The study has reached into the conclusion

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that the relationship between patterns of family upbringing and deviant behavior interpret as a ratio of (27.0 %) of the deviant behavior in all patterns of upbringing.

**Keywords:** Talented, adolescence, family upbringing, democratic, excessive protection

## **Introduction**

Family plays an active role in the normal growth of the personality of their children. It is the most influential factor in the health and psychological normality in childhood. It also counts as the basic source of information and skills and the most important institution through which the child receives care, guidance and values (Shinawi, 1998) and through which the child is imbued with the family upbringing, values and standards and oriented-rules for his actions and behaviors. Within this context, the family atmosphere affects the growth of the son and his behavior and trends as well. It is also mostly associated with the patterns and methods through which the parents perform the roles assigned to them (Bin Auf, 2009). In this regard, Al-Jabali (2000) pointed out that the family upbringing marred with various problems and deviations will reflect on all its members and on its cohesion, stability and harmony among its members.

The normal family upbringing is one of the indicators judging the progress or backwardness of society. Therefore, the rates of infant death, rates of disability and the components of the culture of the child and the rates of disabilities and behavioral deviations among them give the indicators for the comparison between the communities in terms of progress or backwardness. In this regard, Belsky, Steinberg, Houts, Halpern and Felsher (2010) argue that the harsh treatment of the mother to her children predicts a behavior oriented towards behavioral riskiness among these children at an early age and having drugs, alcohol, delinquency and patterns of aggressive behavior in addition to increasing the chance of behavioral deviation (Kettani. 2001).

Therefore, the family upbringing plays an important role in the upbringing of the children especially the category of the talented that is badly in need of support and understanding on the part of others. Keller confirmed the importance of the different environmental impacts on the children's and talented children's education. Besides, the study of Hine and Gimoylnes asserted

the role of family environment for the talented children and the family factors in supporting the high achievement (Bazah, 2008).

Owaidat's study (1997) also confirms the above point by investigating the effect of the patterns of family upbringing in the nature of behavioral deviations among the students in the eighth, ninth and tenth stages in Jordan. This study shows statistically significant differences in favor of the type of family upbringing rather than the dependent factors. It is noticed that the behavioral problems decrease among the democratic parents and the disciplinary procedures decrease as well. Abdul Hafeez's study (2001) aims to find out the methods of family upbringing and their relationship with the deviant behavior in one of the slum areas in Assyut city. The study sample consisted of ten cases. The study results showed that the vast majority of slum dwellers tend to use conventional methods in the upbringing of children represented by cruelty, deprivation and negligence.

In another study, Hillat, Quthat and Rababah (2008) studied the relationship between patterns of family upbringing and the emotional disorders among the male students of the sixth primary stage primary where the results showed that the prevalent family upbringing methods among the families of the emotionally disturbed students are the authoritarian and the negligence patterns. Besides, the study found a direct correlation between the emotional disorders and the authoritarian pattern of the father. Al-Bahri and Oran (2010) studied the patterns of family upbringing and their impact on the deviant behavior among the tenth stage. Moreover, the study reached into the conclusion that the patterns of family upbringing have an effect in reducing the deviant behavior among the students of tenth stage.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to detect the patterns of family upbringing used by parents (father and mother) and their influence on the nature of the behavioral deviations of the talented son in the city of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia.

## **Study Research Questions**

The present study answers the following question: To what extent the family upbringing patterns used by parents (father and mother) interpret the behavioral deviations of the talented son in the city of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia?

## **Importance of the Study**

1. This study comes in the light of the growing contemporary challenges that constitute a threat on education and on the various educational institutions especially the school.
2. This study works on enriching the literature concerning the talented, the role of parents in their upbringing and the nature of the deviant behaviors spread among them.
3. Despite the widespread of research and descriptive studies that deal with family upbringing and behavioral deviations, the studies that focus on the talented students in this area are few to the researcher's knowledge.
4. The present study can contribute to the construction and preparation of rich educational programs for the talented students to improve the deviant behavior.

## **Limits of the study**

The results of the present study are determined by the tools used including the scale of family upbringing, where many scales are used when developing the main scale, and the scale of behavioral deviations where Burks Behavior Rating Scale (BBRS) is used and it is based on other scales, literature review and previous studies.

Moreover, the present study is determined by the study community and the sample used consists of the talented male and female students of the age group (13-15 years) who have been selected according to the criteria for selecting talented students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through a scale designed and suitable for the environment of Saudi Arabia. The study community, according to what is available, consists of (342) male and female students, and one third of the total number of the population will be selected as a sample which constitutes about (33 %) of the study population which responded voluntarily to the scales of the study.

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As far as the place is concerned, the city of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia is chosen due to the widespread of the different schools of talented students. While the temporal limits are represented by the time of conducting the study which is the second semester of the academic year (2014-2015 AC). Finally, the present study is determined by the way the individuals respond to the scales after clarifying them.

### **Definitions of the Study**

**Patterns of Parental Upbringing:** a process of education carried out by the parents and it is through which the child learns the behaviors, standards, skills and attitudes that religion, society and education accept (Al-Mudanat, 2003). Procedurally, it is primarily determined by the score obtained by the talented student on a scale of parental upbringing used for this purpose which is the democratic pattern against the authoritarian pattern and the excessive protection pattern against the pattern of negligence.

The researchers define them as the sum of the means which include the personal, mental, psychological, social, emotional, physical, spiritual and behavioral aspects used by the parents to form the healthy child.

**Behavioral Deviation:** It is a recurrent and continuous pattern of behavior through which all the basic rights of others are violated. It is associated with the concepts of crime and delinquency and it means any behavior that is contrary to the customs and traditions of a particular group and it comes from individuals who are not adults. It represents a case of bad behavior that threatens the life of the group and the community and it pushes the individual to crime (Abdul Muti, 2001). Procedurally, it is defined as the score the talented male student obtains in the dimensions of the behavior rating scale used in the present study.

To the researchers of the present study, it refers to all behaviors that are socially unacceptable which the student performs in the school or family or in the surrounding environment and are incompatible with the traditions and customs of the society. Besides, it is agreed by the members of the community that such behaviors are unacceptable and deviated and carried out by the child repeatedly for a long period of time. They do not come suddenly or as a result of a particular incident or a particular disease.

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**Talented Students or Outstanding Students:** Al-Sharee (2001) defines the talented student as the student who has unusual willingness or ability or has an outstanding performance when compared to the rest of his peers in one or more of the areas estimated by the society especially in the areas of mental superiority, innovative thinking, academic achievement, and skills and abilities and he needs special care and education the school cannot afford through the regular curriculum (Andijani, 2005). Procedurally, it refers to any student diagnosed by the Department of Education in the city of Jeddah through an individual IQ test, which is Stanford - Binet test, fourth edition, and through the teachers' estimations and remarks that he has talent.

## **Methodology and Procedures**

### **Study Population and the Sampling**

The study population has been selected from the talented students in the city of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia and the study will be applied to these students' parents (father and mother). The number of these talented students, according to the by diagnosis of the Department of Education in the city of Jeddah for the academic year (2015-2014 AC), is about (342) students. The following table shows the distribution of the members of the study population who are students in grades (first, second and third Intermediate stage) in the city of Jeddah.

The study sample is (33%) of the population after excluding the pilot study which is (50) male and female students and consequently the rest of the sample is (292) students. The study sample has been randomly and intentionally selected.

### **Tools of the Study**

#### **First: The Scale of Family Upbringing Patterns**

The scale of family upbringing is developed with the help of the previous studies and the literature review. Among the scales used in these studies, the researcher includes Al-Shalabi's Scale (1993), which consists of two patterns namely the democratic pattern and the authoritarian pattern and Al-Kettani's Scale (2000) which consists of seven parental trends which are the normality, authoritarianism, excessive protection, indulgence, cruelty, negligence, and fluctuation.

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The scale consists of two images: (a) which concerns the pattern of the father's upbringing and image (b) which concerns the pattern of the mother's upbringing. Each image consists of 40 items that measure two dimensions: the democratic - authoritarian direction and consists of (20) items starting from (1-20) and the direction of excessive protection – negligence and consists of (20) items starting from (21-40). The scale comprises positive and negative items that will be identified when talking about each direction. The items measure the responses that are most frequently recurrent among the parents of the identified individual as listed and classified by the individual himself.

This scale measures the following dimensions:

1 - Democracy – authoritarianism direction:

2 - Excessive protection – negligence direction:

### **Scale Validity in Its Current Form**

#### **A - Virtual Validity**

The scale has been shown to some faculty members (raters) which are (5) in number. Such raters have been asked to evaluate the items of the scale with regard to linguistic construction and the affiliation of each item to the field in which it is listed. A standard of (80%) is adopted to make the raters' amendments. After rating the scale, several changes and adjustments have been made concerning the linguistic construction and the amendments recommended by the raters have been done.

#### **B - Construct Validity**

The construct validity has been calculated by calculating the correlation coefficient between the degree of each item and the total score of the field to which the item belongs. The coefficients have been represented by table (1) below:

**Table (1): Coefficients of the construct validity between the item and the dimensions of the family upbringing scale**

Item	Correlation coefficient	Item	Correlation coefficient	Item	Correlation coefficient	Item	Correlation coefficient
1	0.45*	11	0.56**	21	0.60**	31	0.57**
2	0.65**	12	0.31*	22	0.32*	32	0.33*
3	0.57**	13	0.49**	23	0.44**	33	0.59**
4	0.53**	14	0.32*	24	0.49**	34	0.65**
5	0.40**	15	0.65**	25	0.11	35	0.79**
6	0.31*	16	0.48**	26	0.68**	36	0.64**
7	0.56**	17	0.56**	27	0.82**	37	0.59**
8	0.50**	18	0.17	28	0.59**	38	0.68**
9	0.64**	19	0.69**	29	0.68**	39	0.71**
10	0.21	20	0.59**	30	0.73**	40	0.80**

\*\*Level of significance  $\alpha = 0.01$  \*Level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$

It is clear from the table that all the items are statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  except the following items: 10, 18 and 25 and therefore they have been deleted in the final shape of the scale. Accordingly, the scale in its current form consists of (37) items.

### **C – Factor Validity**

To verify the factor construct validity of the scale of family upbringing patterns, the researchers have applied the scale to a pilot sample consisting of (50) parents of the talented students. Then, the factor analysis was used through the Principle Component Method, and then the Orthogonal Rotation is used through Varimax Method for all the items that constitute the scale in order to provide a better degree of interpretation of the factor construct extracted before the rotation. The analysis was determined by four factors to check whether the sub-items of the scale get saturated around those factors. The potential root (Eigen Value) was used according to Kaiser's standard where the value of the potential root of the factor is above one. After adopting (0.30) as a minimum to the significance level of item saturation with the factor according to

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Guilford's standard, the results indicated that the saturations of all the items of the scale, which are (37), were greater than (0.30). Table (2) below illustrates the factor construct extracted from the analysis.

**Table (2): The values of the potential root and the discrepancy ratios explaining the factors extracted after deleting the items and orthogonally rotating the axes of the family upbringing scale**

Factor	Potential root	The explaining discrepancy ratio	Summative discrepancy explaining ratio
First	5.720	15.460	15.460
Second	4.313	11.658	27.117
Third	3.999	10.808	37.925
Four	3.463	9.359	47.285

As it is clear from the above table, the values of the potential roots of the extracted four factors are above one and this explains what constitutes (47.29) of the total variance in the response of the study sample toward the scale. To reveal the nature of the factors extracted and the items saturating on each of them, the saturation values of each item in each factor has been calculated.

### **The Reliability of the Scale in Its Original Image**

#### **Test-Retest Reliability**

The scale has been applied to a pilot sample of (40) male and female students from within the study population and outside the sample. Three weeks later the researchers applied the scale on the same sample. The correlation coefficient between the scores of the two applications was calculated. The correlation coefficients between the scores of each field came as follows: democratic (0.69), authoritarian (0.79), idleness (0.71), and excessive protection (0.65). All the correlation coefficients between the scores of each field of the scale aspects were acceptable and

statistically significant at the level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ) which indicates the reliability of all the fields of the scale.

The scale consists of (37) items and four fields:

- Democrat: It means the extent to which parents use methods based on consultation and cooperation with the son and it is measured by the following items: 1, 3, 7, 12, 14, 17, 18, 21, 24, and 35.

- Authoritarian: It means the extent to which parents use methods based on cruelty and severity with the children during their upbringing and it is measured by the following items: 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, and 16.

The two dimensions of democracy and authoritarian are dealt with as an independent pattern.

- Negligence: It means the extent to which parents use methods based on negligence and disregard for the needs and rights of children. It is measured by the following items: 5, 9, 10, 23, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 37.

- Excessive protection: It means the extent to which parents use methods of care and attention more than necessary when raising their children and it is measured by the following items: 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, and 36.

The two dimensions of excessive protection and idleness are dealt with as an independent pattern.

Based on the items of this scale, the lowest score obtained by the diagnosed in the field (democracy - authoritarian) is (18) and the highest score is (72), and so on.

18-36 indicates the predominance of authoritarian direction.

37-54 indicates the level between the authoritarian and democratic directions

55-72 indicates the predominance of the democratic direction.

Based on the items of this scale, the lowest score obtained by the diagnosed individual in the field (negligence - excessive protection) is (19) and the highest score is (76), and so on.

19-38 indicates the predominance of the negligence direction.

39-57 indicates the level between the negligence direction and the excessive protection.

58-76 indicates the predominance of the direction associated with the excessive protection.

It should be note that the scale is composed of two patterns and does not contain a total score. Appendix (4) shows the family upbringing scale in its final shape.

## **Second: The Scale of Behavioral Deviations in Its Original Shape**

Dimensions of Burks Behavior Rating Scale (BBRS) have been used. This scale was developed by Harold F Burks in (1975) and it is useful in identifying the behavioral problems among children. It consists of (19) dimensions while the focus will be on (7) dimensions only which are linked specifically to deviant behavior. The sub-score will be calculated for each dimension in order to make sure the availability of the problem among students. Besides, it is possible to apply one dimension and to calculate the output of it.

The following seven dimensions have been dealt with in addition to dealing with the total score of the scale. These dimensions include: excessive withdrawal, excessive dependability, lack of ability to control action, lack of ability to control feelings of anger, excessive aggression, stubbornness and resistance, lack of social obedience.

## **The Psychometric Characteristics of the Scale in Its Current Shape**

### **A - Virtual Validity**

The scale has been shown to (5) raters who are faculty members. Such raters have been asked to give comments on the linguistic construction and the affiliation of each item to the field in which it is listed. A standard of (80%) is adopted to make the raters' amendments. After

rating the scale, several changes and adjustments have been made especially concerning the linguistic construction.

## **B – Factor Validity**

To verify the factor construct validity of the deviant behavior scale, the researchers have applied the scale to a pilot sample consisting on (50) talented students. The factor analysis was used through the Principle Component Method. Then the Orthogonal Rotation was used through Varimax Method for all the items that constitute the scale in order to provide a better degree of the interpretation of the factor construct extracted before the rotation. The analysis was determined by four factors to check whether the sub-items of the scale get saturated around those factors. The potential root (Eigen Value) was used according to Kaiser’s standard where the value of the potential root of the factor is above one. After adopting (0.30) as a minimum to the significance level of item saturation with the factor according to Guilford’s standard, the results indicated that the saturations of all the items of the scale, which are (38), were greater than (0.30) according to Guilford’s standard. Table (3) below illustrates the factor construct extracted from the analysis.

**Table (3): The values of the potential root and the discrepancy ratios explaining the factors extracted after deleting the items and orthogonally rotating the axes of the deviant behavior scale**

Factor	Potential root	The explaining discrepancy ratio	Summative discrepancy explaining ratio
First	5.657	14.887	14.887
Second	5.054	13.300	28.187
Third	4.900	12.895	41.083
Four	2.966	7.806	48.889
Five	2.740	7.212	56.100
Six	2.394	6.301	62.401
Seven	2.205	5.803	68.204



As it is clear from the above table, the values of the potential roots of the extracted seven factors are above one and this explains what constitutes (68.20) of the total variance in the response of the study sample toward the scale.

### C - Construct Validity

The construct validity has been calculated by calculating the correlation coefficient between the degree of each item and the total score of the field to which the item belongs. The coefficients have been represented by table (4) below:

**Table (4): Coefficients of the construct validity between the item and the total score of the deviant behavior scale**

Item	Correlation coefficient	Item	Correlation coefficient	Item	Correlation coefficient	Item	Correlation coefficient
1	0.55**	12	0.55**	23	-0.02	34	0.60**
2	0.70**	13	0.65*	24	0.65**	35	0.49**
3	0.70**	14	0.59**	25	0.14	36	0.49**
4	0.55**	15	0.72*	26	0.48**	37	0.76**
5	0.59**	16	0.67**	27	0.54**	38	0.64**
6	0.65**	17	0.70**	28	0.71**	39	0.50**
7	0.60**	18	0.50**	29	0.71**	40	0.65**
8	0.62**	19	0.64**	30	0.62**	41	0.62**
9	0.70**	20	0.71**	31	0.69**		
10	0.79**	21	0.79**	32	0.74**		
11	0.15	22	0.54**	33	0.71**		

\*\*Level of significance  $\alpha = 0.01$  \*Level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$

It is clear from the table that all the items are statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  except the following items: 11, 25 and 23. Therefore, they have been deleted in the final shape of the scale. Accordingly, the scale in its current form consists of (38) items. Besides, the construct validity has been conducted between the total score and the four fields. Table 5 shows the results.

**Table (5): Construct validity between the seven fields and the total score of the deviant behavior scale.**

Field	Internal validity
Withdrawal	0.80**
Dependability	0.85**
Lack of ability to control action	0.79**
Lack of ability to control anger	0.88**
Excessive aggression	0.83**
Stubbornness and resistance	0.84**
Lack of social obedience	0.78**

\*\*Level of significance  $\alpha=0.01$

It is clear that there exists an internal validity between the seven fields and the total score of the scale and it is significant at the significance level  $\alpha=0.01$

### Reliability of the Current Scale

The following has been conducted:

#### A – Reliability through Cronbach Alpha Method: (Internal Consistency Reliability)

The reliability of internal consistency has been used by doing item statistics. This is conducted by using the equation of Cronbach Alpha to calculate the values of reliability where a sample of (40) male and female students has been selected from inside and outside the study population. Table (6) shows the results of this process.

**Table (6): The values of reliability coefficients by using repetition and Cronbach alpha of the deviant behavior scale**

Dimension	Scale items	Cronbach Alpha
Withdrawal	4,5,9,25,26,27	0.75
Dependability	15,17,18,19,22,23	0.77
Lack of ability to control action	1,6,10,11,13	0.73

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Lack of ability to control anger	2,14,16,21,36	0.80
Excessive aggression	12,24,31,33,37	0.81
Stubbornness and resistance	7,8,32,34,35	0.76
Lack of social obedience	3,20,28,29,30,38	0.89
Total score	-	0.91

The above table shows that the correlation coefficients are suitable where the scores range on the scale dimensions by following the method of internal consistency between (0.75-0.89).

### **B - Test-Retest Reliability**

The scale has been applied to a pilot sample of (40) male and female students from inside the study population and outside the sample. Three weeks later, the researchers applied the scale on the same sample. The correlation coefficient between the scores of the two applications was calculated. The correlation coefficients between the scores of each field of the scale fields have come as mentioned in table (7):

**Table (7): Reliability coefficients through re-testing between the four fields between the first and second application of the deviant behavior scale**

Field	Correlation
Withdrawal	0.88**
Dependability	0.90**
Lack of ability to control action	0.94**
Lack of ability to control anger	0.91**
Excessive aggression	0.92**
Stubbornness and resistance	0.89**
Lack of social obedience	0.88**
Total score	0.91**

\*\*Level of significance  $\alpha=0.01$

It is clear from the above table that all the correlation coefficients between the seven fields are suitable and statistically significant at the significance level  $\alpha=0.01$ . This proves the reliability of all the scale fields and the total score as well. Consequently, the scale remained in its final shape consisting of seven dimensions.

**Such dimensions are interpreted as follows:**

Table (19): Interpretation of the results of the dimensions and the total score of the deviant behavior scale

Dimension	Not significant	Significant	Highly significant
Excessive response	6-12	13-21	22-30
Excessive dependability	6-12	13-21	22-30
Lack of ability to control action	5-10	11-17	18-25
Lack of ability to control anger	4-8	9-13	14-20
Excessive aggression	5-10	11-17	18-25
Stubbornness and resistance	5-17	18-25	
Lack of social obedience	7-14	15-24	25-35

**The results of the question: To what extent the family upbringing patterns used by parents (father and mother) can interpret the behavioral deviations of the talented son in the city of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia?**

And to identify the extent to which family upbringing patterns participate in making behavioral deviations among the talented students, the researchers have used the multiple regression analysis and this is shown in Table (8) below:

**Table (8): Results of the multiple regression analysis of the role of the family upbringing patterns in making behavioral deviations among the talented students in Intermediate school in the city of Jeddah**

Dependent variable	Predictors	Coefficient B	Multiple correlation R	Discrepancy R2	F	Probability
Family upbringing patterns	Democratic	-10.50	0.32*	0.10	10.82	0.00
	Authoritarian	10.71	0.33*	0.21	11.84	0.00
	Excessive protection	8.72	0.17*	0.24	3.01	0.09
	Idleness	-7.16	0.17*	0.27	2.83	0.10

The above table shows that both styles (democratic authoritarian) have clarified together about (21.0 %) of the change in the deviant behavior. The democratic pattern clarified (10%) of the deviant behavior while the authoritarian pattern clarified (11 %) of the deviant behavior. The total score of the patterns of family upbringing clarified (27.0 %) of the deviant behavior in all the patterns of family upbringing. Accordingly, it contributed to the interpretation of the deviant behavior in the two dimensions of democracy and authoritarianism, whereas the pattern of excessive protection added only (3%) for interpretation. This contribution was not significant in the interpretation of the deviant behavior. In the end, the idleness pattern added only (3%) to the explanation, but this contribution was also not significant in the interpretation of deviant behavior.

The result of this question agrees with the results of Owaidat's study (1997) concerning the investigation of the effect of family upbringing patterns on the nature of behavioral deviations among the students in the eighth, ninth and tenth stages. Besides, the present study's results agree with the findings of Al-Bahri and Oran's study (2010) about the patterns of family upbringing and their effect on the deviant behavior among the tenth stage students in the Departments of Education in the city of Karak.

With regard to the authoritarian pattern, the results of the study show that it is related to the deviant behavior and it explains more than that explained by the democratic pattern itself, i.e., it explains approximately (11%) of the deviant behavior. This means that the greater the parents use the authoritarian pattern in the house, the more they are dominant and tough with the son, the more they take decisions on his behalf, the greater the level of deviant behavior

becomes. This pushes him to be more deviant. Through reviewing the results of the current question, it has been found that the authoritarian pattern, compared to other patterns, is the most important factor in the occurrence of deviant behavior.

The result of the current question agrees with what Abdul Hafeez (2001) pointed about knowing the family upbringing methods and their relationship with the deviant behavior in one of the slums of the city of Assyut. Moreover, the result of the current question somehow agrees with the findings of Hillat, Quthat and Rababah's study (2008) about the relationship between the patterns of family upbringing and the emotional disorders among the six primary stage male students.

While the pattern of excessive protection added only (3%) to the explanation and this contribution was not significant in the interpretation of the deviant behavior. At the end, the idleness pattern added only (3%) to the explanation and this is also not significant in the interpretation of the deviant behavior.

This means that the excessive protection used by the parent and which is believed to contribute to prevent the son from doing deviant behaviors in addition to the idleness, negligence and ignorance practiced by some parents with their children, all of this does not contribute to the occurrence of deviant behavior among children.

The researchers of the present study attribute the parents' use of the democratic pattern as the most influential method in the upbringing of the talented students to the parents' knowledge that this method is the most suitable in education as being demonstrated by many studies and to the openness of the communities and children and the non-acceptance of the repressive and authoritarian patterns alone in education. This indicates that there is a growing awareness among parents in the city of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia on the role of parents in education. Besides, the researcher attributes the parents' use of cruelty and domination to the desire to control children and to control their decisions and this in the end pushes some children to make different deviant behaviors.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, the researchers have come out with the following recommendations:

1. Working on guidance leaflets for the parents to encourage them to practice democratic family upbringing methods since they have an effect on the deviant behavior as demonstrated by the present study.

2. Educating parents through lectures so that they should not be dominant of the male children. It is true that children have some wrong behaviors, yet, it is necessary to give them a chance because they are talented.

3. Attending to the present study by working on constructing awareness programs for students to train them on how to deal with the different behaviors before they turn into deviant behaviors.

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**ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE -  
PROFICIENCY ISSUES OF JAFFNA STUDENTS  
(Prescribed as a Text Book for University Undergraduates)**

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## Foreword

*English as a Second Language - Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students* by Dr. V. Suntharesan is a significant contribution to our understanding of the problems faced by the students as well as teachers of English. The book focuses on Jaffna students' proficiency in English.

Jaffna has a special place in the history of Tamils as well as in the history of modern education of Tamils. The first-ever science textbook written in Tamil was from Jaffna. It was the scholars from Jaffna who should be considered as the founders of modern prose in Tamil and its use in textbooks as well as in other domains.

Jaffna Tamils were known for their great competence in English as well. Administrators, lawyers, engineers, medical doctors and other professionals from Jaffna excelled in their careers using English as the primary language of communication. In recent years, for various reasons, education in general and collegiate education in particular, was severely affected.

Skills in English have become a prerequisite for pursuit of knowledge in various fields. *English as a Second Language - Proficiency Issues of Jaffna Students* by Dr. V. Suntharesan will help both students and teachers use English effectively.

We need to follow Professor Nadaraja Pillai's (2002) declaration that "unless the learner is exposed to two sets of rules, one for grammatical competence and another for some sort of ethnography of speaking, he will not be able to correctly understand the meaning of ... sentences. This overall competence may be described as communicative competence. This communicative competence includes both grammatical competence and variable rules." This textbook will help not only the Jaffna learners and teachers of English but also all South Asian learners and teachers of English.

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# CHAPTER – 1

## COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

### **Introduction**

Communicative Approach focuses more on meaning than form of the language. It emphasizes the simulation of real life situation within the classroom. It recommends that students should be adequately exposed to the target language. Hence the adoption of communicative approach would prompt the students to use the language for communication with ease and comfort outside the classroom

Communicative approach provides teachers with insight regarding the modern developments of theories and practices of second language teaching. Teachers are also made to realize that mere mastery of grammatical rules will not lead to the expected outcome of language learning and the ultimate aim is to achieve communicative competence.

As Communicative Language Teaching aims at communicative competence, students will be more competent in the use of English for communication. A good level of English will help them to graduate confidently from universities; to obtain jobs; to read technical and scientific materials; and secure scholarships and jobs abroad.

In Sri Lanka, students undergo certain difficulties such as exposure to language and motivation and improper adoption of communicative language teaching methods and subject demotivating factors like inadequate vocabulary, and difficulties in structure and listening that restrict their communicative ability. Hence, this volume analyzes the factors that hinder the students' communicative competence and suggests strategies for developing their communicative ability.

## **Communicative Competence**

Even though the meaning of ‘Communicative’ is assumed to be fairly stable in modern language theory, when the use of this term by various writers in the field is considered one could find that there is no generally accepted meaning of this term. Thus each individual teacher may develop his own sense of what ‘communicative’ implies to him based on a thorough knowledge of how it is used with different interpretations in the literature.

Various definitions of communicative competence proposed by various linguists and scholars are quoted and discussed in this section.

In the view of Stern (1992), the term ‘Communicative’ centres on involving learners in “Authentic communication” and in “real communication”. This definition attempts to separate ‘real’ language from language which is typically used to teach and learn language. In other words, the focus is not on learning specific language features but on putting the language to use as the circumstances require. Stern appears to contrast the concepts of message – oriented language and medium – oriented language in order to distinguish between language code and communicative intent. He further claimed that children learn their first language in the process of communication and continued to define communicative activities by contrasting them with classroom ones.

For Morrow (1977, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 129) communicative activities have three salient features: (1) some type of information gap, (2) a degree of choice and (3) the existence of feedback. Stern went on suggesting that all of these are possible within the classroom environment. Stern’s view of communicative competence which requires authenticity can be contrasted with that of Morrow, who has no such requirement. A close look at the activities suggested by Stern reveals many instances where information gap, choice and feedback are not present. For example, when a student is asked by a teacher to open a window in a warm room and the student obeys, Stern may claim that the sequence of events was genuinely communicative. It could be recognized that Morrow would do the same but not under

communicative method. It is possible to state that when Morrow presents students with contrived activities, Stern's authenticity requirement is missing.

The New Oxford Dictionary of English (1998, p. 371) defines 'communicative' as "willing, eager or able to talk or impart information". In the same source, the verb 'communicate' is defined as "to share or exchange information, news, or ideas" or to "impart or pass on information, news or ideas: convey or transmit in a non-verbal way: succeed in conveying one's ideas or in evoking understanding in others".

A communicative activity is one where some or all of the available information necessary to complete the activity is accessible to a student only by that student asking another for the information (Smiley, 2005).

Pirasad (2003) maintained that when learners are able to perform the communicative functions that they need, they achieve "communicative competence" in the language.

Kathleen and Kitao (1996) commented that the basic idea of communicative competence remains the ability to use language appropriately, both receptively and productively, in real situations.

"Communicative competence refers to the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication" (Canale, 1980 as cited in Beale, 2002, p. 1).

For Nunn (2007, p. 30) "Competence in communication is a holistic, global and international concept encompassing various interlocking components of usable knowledge and the skills and abilities needed to put these into practice within a variety of communities and types of community. Competence includes skills in areas related to both written and spoken language and certain adaptive skills such as the ability to negotiate meaning with people of different backgrounds."



“Competence in communication in the local partial individual context involves various interlocking components of usable knowledge and the skills and abilities needed to put these into practice both within the local community and in preparation for communication with a variety of communities and types of community. Developing competence involves developing transferable skills and creativity in areas related to both spoken and written genres” (Nunan, 2007, p. 31).

Savignon (1972, as cited in Moss, 2005) described communicative competence as being able to understand and interpret messages, understand the social contexts in which language is being used, apply the rules of grammar, and employ strategies to keep communication from breaking down.

Nadarajapillai (2002) stated that unless the learner is exposed to two sets of rules, one for grammatical competence and another for some sort of ethnography of speaking, he will not be able to correctly understand the meaning of such sentences. This overall competence may be described as communicative competence. This communicative competence includes both grammatical competence and variable rules.

Communication is not just a matter of language. When we speak, our speech is accompanied to a greater or lesser extent by so-called non – verbal communication: gestures, facial expressions, distance, body attitudes, sight etc. We furthermore transmit many signals about ourselves, via our clothing, hairstyle etc. Therefore communicative competence is extremely comprehensive and complex. The verbal part of communicative competence comprises all the so - called four skills, listening, reading, speaking and writing. It seems to emphasize this since there is a very common misunderstanding that communicative competence only refers to the ability to speak. Thus it can be claimed that communicative competence is both productive and receptive. Communicative competence no longer describes just a particular proficiency or skill, even though the word competence invites such a narrow interpretation. Communicative competence also covers conditions that affect communication and, for example, facilitate international communication (Margrethe, Iversen & Ledstrup, 1996).

Lund (1996) argued that communicative competence is not simply a matter of being orally able to keep one's end up. A too one sided emphasis on teaching this proficiency is perhaps one of the reasons why our pupils find it so difficult to fulfill the demands made on them. Communicative competence means competence in all four proficiencies – both the productive and the receptive.

Xiaohong (1994) remarked that according to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, communicative competence includes:

- 1) Knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the language.
- 2) Knowledge of the rules of speaking (knowing how to begin and end conversations, what topics may be talked about in different types of speech events, which address forms should be used with different persons in different situations, etc).
- 3) Knowing how to use and respond to different types of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, thanks and invitations : and
- 4) Knowing how to use language appropriately. (p. 31)

Spitzberg and Capach (2001) claimed that communicative competence is the ability to choose a communicative behavior that is both appropriate and effective for a given situation. Interpersonal competency allows one to achieve her/his communication goals without causing the other party to lose face. Competence includes three components: 1) knowledge, 2) Skill, and 3) Motivation. Knowledge simply means what behaviour is best suited for a given situation. Skill is having the ability to apply that behaviour in the given context. Motivation is having the desire to communicate in a competent manner.

Widdowson (1989, as cited in Erton, 2007) wrote that communicative competence is not a matter of knowing rules for the composition of sentences and being able to employ such rules to assemble expressions from scratch as and when occasion requires. It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and a kit of rules, so to speak, and being able to apply the rules to make whatever adjustments are necessary according

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to contextual demands. Communicative competence in this view is essentially a matter of adaptation, and rules are not generative but regulative and subservient.

According to Canale and Swain (1980,p.5 as cited in Erton, 2007), it is common to find the term ‘communicative competence’ used to refer exclusively to knowledge or capability relating to the rules of language use and the term “grammatical (or linguistic) competence used to refer to the reciprocal rules of grammar”. They find the rules of language useless since the language user is unaware of the rules of language use. In other words, there is reciprocity between the language rules and the rules of language. To be brief, Canale and Swain consider the term ‘Communicative competence’ as a mediator which refers to the relationship between grammatical competence (the knowledge of the rules of language) and the sociolinguistic competence (the knowledge of the rules of language use)

### **Linguistic Competence and Communicative Competence**

Linguistic competence is defined “as a speaker-hearer’s ability to speak and understand language in a grammatically - correct manner” (Ottenheimer, 2006, p. 95). Linguistic competence is an area of study in the field of intercultural communication founded by the linguistic grammarian Noam Chomsky. Linguistic competence is the use of grammatical use of a language, whereas communicative competence is the use of social language rules. Chomsky founded the idea of communication with the understanding of grammatically correct expressions. Chomsky chose more of a text - book approach to analyze language than a real world use of the language. Chomsky claimed that language should consist of an undiversified speaker – hearer environment. He felt that it is difficult for a speaker – hearer to exercise their linguistic competence in real – world situations. According to Ottenheimer (2006), Chomsky thought of real situations as “distractions”. Chomsky believed that the linguistic competence of people gets affected by “distractions” such as social norms. The interference caused by social norms in communication forces the speaker to develop communication competence. A linguistically competent person may use perfect grammar and a communicatively competent speaker would take into consideration the appropriateness of the situation.

### **Effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching at the University of Jaffna**

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Jaffna had a reputed past history of English education and Gunsekera (2005) commented about it.

“The most prestigious, however, was the American Mission’s Jaffna College (1879), the former Batticotta Seminary, which prepared students for London examinations and higher degrees in India and trained students in a wide range of subjects in an atmosphere of liberal discussion and freedom----The Missionaries learnt Tamil, translated texts, produced a Tamil-English dictionary and gave priority to the teaching of English; as a result, the levels of English education were higher in Jaffna than in the rest of the country” (Jayewardene, 2003:205 as cited in Gunsekera, 2005:38)

But presently, due to the inevitable changes in the sociolinguistic and political arena in Jaffna, English language proficiency has declined. Thus, it is imperative to adopt measures to implement the CLT approach successfully in schools and in the tertiary level educational institutions in Jaffna in order to maintain the functional use of English for academic as well as administrative purposes.

Despite the popularity of the use of communicative language teaching approaches in schools in some parts of Asian countries, communicative language teaching approaches are not yielding full effect in elementary and secondary classrooms in government schools in Jaffna and many teachers remain uncertain about the effectiveness of communicative language teaching and are unsure about how to implement it in classrooms. While most teachers prefer to be following a communicative approach, in practice they are following more traditional approaches. Despite the theoretical development of communicative language teaching, understanding among teachers remains limited. Classrooms in which communicative language teaching is effectively used are rare.

Several reasons have been put forward for the unsuccessful CLT classes in some cases. While there is general agreement about some of the characteristics of communicative language teaching, other aspects lack consensus or even clear definition. Harmer (2003, p. 289) has stated

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that the “Problem with communicative language teaching is that the term has always meant a multitude of different things to different people”.

Savignon (2002) maintained that teacher education in the use of communicative language teaching approaches has not received the attention it warrants and that teachers have not been given the necessary tools for using communicative language teaching by teacher educators. The needs of teachers have not been thoroughly studied and communicative language teaching approaches have not been disseminated in ways teachers face in local programmes and classrooms. A notion put forward by Bartels (2005, p. 748) that “Researchers and teachers have different ways of validating ideas in journal articles and have different knowledge” is related to this idea of dissemination of information about communicative language teaching approaches. He pointed out that appropriate (or appropriately designed) experiences may provide better assistance to teachers to transfer knowledge about communicative language teaching approaches into actual practices.

It is worth mentioning the comments made by Sunthareswaran (2004:183) in this context. “From observation in classrooms and discussions carried out with teachers of English, one fact has emerged that a good number of teachers of English do not know much about what is meant by communicative approach to language teaching. Many of them still use the Grammar Translation Method. Some use the Structural Method getting the students to repeat the sentences with the teacher and memorize them.”

The negative assessment of teachers’ knowledge and use of communicative language teaching may also have arisen because, as a study indicates (Mangubhai et al, 2007), teachers probably use a mixture of communicative language teaching and non communicative language teaching features in what they call communicative language teaching approaches.

The general situation pertaining to English language teaching and learning in Government schools in Sri Lanka is discussed below briefly.

Though students may have obtained higher grades for English in the GCE (O.L) and GCE (A.L) examinations, they are unable to communicate in English. They achieve the linguistic competence while they are far behind in their knowledge of the communicative competence. In other words, students' knowledge of the structure (Grammar) of the language may be satisfactory whereas they fail to master the functional aspects of the language. The teaching methods followed by teachers fail to promote the students' communicative ability. The evaluation system too is designed to test the students' knowledge of the linguistic structure of the language alone.

By the time students enter the university, their English language proficiency is disappointingly low. There are certain reasons for the low level language proficiency of the students.

- Most of the GCE (A.L) students concentrate on the main subjects and neglect learning English as their immediate objective is to enter the university.
- In case of the undergraduates following courses in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Jaffna, majority of them are from rural areas where there are schools that suffer for the want of teachers of English.
- In the Jaffna peninsula, there are schools where unqualified teachers who don't have any training or experience in the field of teaching have been appointed.
- Teachers of English do not have access to attend seminars or workshops to receive appropriate knowledge or practice to teach English for communicative purposes.
- Students are not sufficiently exposed to English. It is their mother tongue, Tamil that they use in the family circle, in the society, among their peers, and in the school.
- The motivation to learn English is purely instrumental. That is, they do not intend to use English for social integration, but for pragmatic needs, specially for getting through examinations. There are frequent instances where students show interest in following English classes to pass international examinations like IELTS and TOEFL for migration purposes and for admission to foreign universities.

### **Drawback of 'Situational Language Teaching'**

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In the situational presentation the teacher demonstrates meaning by reference to objects or events actually present or enacted in the classroom. These objects and events represent the situation. For example, the teacher holds up a pencil, points to it and says: This is a pencil. This is a well organized English sentence, which is an instance of correct usage. The question arising here is whether it is an instance of appropriate use. The situation created by the teacher does not normally require him to make use of such a sentence. The pupils know that a pencil is an object. What they may not know is what this object is called in English. This sentence would be appropriate only if it were necessary to identify an object: the sentence would normally function as an identification. But the learners do not require the identification of the object as a pencil, but they need to have it named as 'a pencil'. Hence the correct form of the sentence in order to demonstrate use is as follows.

The English word for this is 'pencil' or this is called 'a pencil' in English. However it should be noticed, that a structure similar to "This is a pencil.' may entail an appropriate communicative function in another situation. For example, in a science laboratory a teacher may have to identify a particular instrument or a substance to students when conducting an experiment. During the course of the experiment he may hold a bottle of nitric acid and say: This is nitric acid.

Here he is not merely demonstrating a structure but using the language for a required communicative purpose.

Here is another example in which the limitations of the situational presentation can be observed. To demonstrate the present continuous tense the teacher performs some activities like writing on the blackboard or touching the wall and says:

I am writing on the blackboard.

I am touching the wall.

The situation devised by the teacher makes his sentence inappropriate in terms of use. Since all pupils in the class very well know his actions of writing on the black board and touching the wall, there is no need for him to announce what he is doing.

However there are situations in which sentences similar to the above would be appropriate as an instance of use. For example a person to whom the teacher is not visible wants to know what the teacher is not doing. In such situation the above sentences are appropriate as an instance of use as they represent communicative functions.

The sentence patterns of the kind exemplified by:

I am walking to the window.

He is walking to the window.

It can be an instance of use if the speaker of such a sentence performs an act of communication like explaining something or giving a commentary. With regard to explanation, the speaker makes clear what he/she is doing or what someone else is doing, on the assumption that this is not self evident. In the case of a commentary, the speaker relates to someone else who is not present at the scene going on. There are certain contextual conditions represented by explanation or commentary which determine the state of the sentences of the form in question as actual instances of use and not simply instances of usage.

But when considering the teacher saying a sentence of this kind while performing the activity, the following conclusion can be reached. It is self evident of what he is doing and no explanation is required for his actions and since everybody can watch what he is doing, no commentary is called for either. The language is being manifested but it does not represent any communicative behaviour.

### **Classroom Activities**

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This section discusses how this distinction could be applied to certain language teaching procedures. In the early stages of English courses, the following sentences are of quite common occurrence.

This is a book.

This is my mouth, etc.

By presenting sentences like this in a classroom demonstration either by pointing to a part of his own anatomy or by using a picture, the teacher might provide practice in manipulating these structures enabling his pupils to take part in question and answer series as illustrated below.

Teacher : What's this?  
Pupils : It's a hand.  
Teacher : What's this?  
Pupils : It's an eye and so on.

This type of practice can be effective in teaching the signification of structures and a wide range of vocabulary items which can be introduced into the sentences. However it is to be noted that sentences like 'This is a hand' are rarely used in actual communication. To this effect the value of such sentences as use is low. Furthermore, the question of the teacher doesn't resemble the normal question, but it, of course is a prompt for the pupils to come out with required instance of usage. The exchange between the teacher and the pupils doesn't represent a normal instance of language use, but it only serves as a teaching device that instills the signification of a certain structure and vocabulary in the minds of pupils.

The situation above is an exchange as question and answer between the teacher and pupils, and this indicates the kind of meaning called signification. However it is possible to conceive of situations in which similar exchange of question and answer achieves value and thus becomes instance of use.

For example imagine the situation of someone trying to work out what a rather obscure picture is intended to represent. The interrogative sentence that is used to identify a figure in this context and the answer has high value here and hence became an instance of use.

It is recommended that portions from other subjects on the school curriculum can be the area of use for teaching a foreign language. Language teachers usually suggest that the language they are teaching should be associated with situations outside the class. But the fact to be stressed here is that school is also a part of the child's real world where familiar experience is formalized and extended into new concepts. Subjects like history, geography, general science and so on harmonize with the child's own experience and hence a foreign language may relate to the outside world indirectly through these subjects.

When a foreign language is associated with areas of use represented by other subjects on the school curriculum, there is the possibility for a link with reality and the pupils' own experience and for providing the means of teaching the language as communication as use, rather than merely as usage. The presentation of language use in the classroom should essentially be the same as the methodological techniques used for introducing the topics in the subjects from which they are drawn. To this effect, it may be argued that the language teacher should be familiar with the subjects taught by his colleagues and it would be an additional burden upon him. It should be admitted that he is to familiarize himself with the topics drawn from other subjects. Besides he must possess knowledge of something other than the language he is teaching. It is obvious that this knowledge refers to the culture and literature associated with the language in question. Hence the suggestion is that the language teacher should possess some basic knowledge of the subjects which his colleagues teach.

It's appropriate to mention two other advantages in the above approach of language teaching. One can be aware of the practical relevance of the foreign language one learns, as a means of communication, since he can use the foreign language to deal with topics which he is concerned with in his other lessons. He need not learn the foreign language to pursue his studies but it is presented to him as a means of practical usefulness. It's also a point that some pupils

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may intend to follow further studies in the medium of foreign language which they learn as academic institutions in many countries require proficiency of a foreign language for higher education. For those aiming for higher education in such countries, the proposed approach would be of particular relevance. Even in countries where foreign language proficiency is not required for higher education, the learners have had an experience of language as communication. One can find it easier to extend his knowledge of use into new situations.

“The other advantage associated with the subject – oriented approach of language teaching is about the transfer from the learner’s own experience. That is, the topics dealt with in the language class are dealt with in other lessons through the medium of learner’s mother tongue. This condition will induce the learners to make use of translation in learning the foreign language. Many teachers pose an argument against this. They comment that the use of mother tongue may distract the learners’ attention from the ways in which foreign language expresses its meaning. It will be true only when the translation operates at the level of usage. But as the proposed approach is concerned, translation operates at the level of use: the learner will realize that the acts of communication are expressed in the foreign language in one way and in his own language in another way” (Widdowson, 1978, p. 18).

### **Structural and Functional Aspects of Language**

Littlewood (1981) observed that the structural view of language is concerned with the grammatical system and it describes how linguistic items can be combined. For example, it may explain the operations of forming the passive “A parcel has been sent’ rather than the active, ‘somebody has sent a parcel’ or describe the word order rules to interpret the difference between the two sentences, ‘The man hit the woman’ and “The woman hit the man”.

The structural view of language and the functional view of language are separate aspects. However the mere consideration of structure alone cannot determine the communicative functions of language. For example, let’s consider the sentence “Why don’t you buy that book? From a structural viewpoint, it is unambiguously an interrogative. But from a functional view point it is ambiguous. It may be a question in certain circumstances. The speaker may genuinely

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want to know why his companion hasn't bought that book. In other circumstances, it may function as a command. It may be the case of a teacher who addressed it to a student who hadn't bought that book. In yet other situations, it could be a plea, a suggestion or a complaint. It can be said that while the structure of the sentence is stable and straight forward, its communicative function varies and depends on specific situational and social factors.

As a single linguistic form expresses more than one function, a single communicative function can be expressed by a number of linguistic forms. For example, a speaker who expects someone to buy him a lunch parcel has many linguistic options such as "Buy me a lunch parcel, please", "Could you please buy me a lunch parcel?" "Would you mind buying me a lunch parcel?" or "Excuse me, could I trouble you to buy me a lunch parcel?" Among these forms, some might perform this directive function in the context of certain social relationships. For example "You've failed to buy me a lunch parcel." could be a directive from boss to peon but not from boss to an officer in a superior position. Other forms may depend on shared situational knowledge for their correct interpretation (e.g. "It's lunch time, isn't it?")

The most efficient communication in a foreign language can't always be achieved by manipulating its structures. But successful communication often depends on the skillful processing of the complete situation with the involvement of the speaker and the hearer, taking account of the knowledge already shared between them and selecting items that may communicate the message effectively. Foreign language learners should be provided with sufficient opportunities to develop these skills by being exposed to situations where the emphasis on using their available resources to communicate meaning efficiently and economically.

Similarly for better comprehension, both a repertoire of linguistic items and a repertoire of strategies for using them in a concrete situation are necessary for the learner.

### **Intercultural Communication**

Culture which is an integral aspect of language learning sometimes fades into the background in the language classes in Sri Lanka.

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Several researchers (e.g. Alpteking, 1993; Coffey, 1999) have stressed on the importance of cultural information in language teaching. According to them communication is an interrelationship between a language and its people and if cultural information is not taught as a part of communicative competence, complete communication cannot happen. As English has emerged as the chief medium of international communication in Sri Lanka, there is an inevitable need for proficiency in English to communicate with people of other countries. Whenever two people from different cultures meet and use English to communicate with each other, they will use it in culturally distinct ways. Hence it is clear that teaching intercultural interaction competence in English may well be among the most significant understandings of the future. It implies that culture should be integrated into the teaching of all language skills so that learners can learn to speak, but also write, in culturally appropriate ways for specific purposes.

### **Concept of Intercultural Communication**

The term *intercultural communication* refers to communication between people from different cultures (Damen, 1987). More precisely it refers to “symbolic exchange processes whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meaning in an interactive situation”. (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 16) In the symbolic exchange process people from cultural communities encode and decode the verbal and nonverbal messages into comprehensive meaning. This definition obviously emphasizes the influence of cultural variability and diversity on communication. It is obvious that two or more people of different cultural backgrounds engage in communication, cultural barriers to communication often arise due to the differences in their life patterns, social style, customs, world view, religion, philosophy and so on. This is often the case when the communicators share a foreign language.

Presently the role of intercultural communication is very important partly because English assumes the role of an international language which is used by millions of people outside its original geographic boundaries to convey national and international perceptions of reality which may be quite different from those of English speaking cultures. As the role of English as an international language gets expanded further and further, the number of L2 users of English

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will continue to grow, much surpassing the number of native speakers of English. English is the main link language across cultures today. Thus the goal of learning English shifts to enable learners to communicate their ideas and culture with not only the speakers of English but also those of other cultures.

The term *intercultural communicative competence* maintains a link with recent traditions in foreign language teaching, but extends the concept of communicative competence in significant ways. Generally it has been described as the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. More precisely, it is defined as the overall internal capacity of an individual to manage key challenging features of intercultural communicative competence to efficiently negotiate a mode of communication and interaction by ability to use and adapt language use appropriately in culturally different contexts. “The distinct features of intercultural communicative competence are cultural differences, unfamiliarity and incompatibility between interactants. Teachers and learners encounter many challenges because of this status of English as a means of international and intercultural communication. It justifies that successful communication is not merely about acquiring a linguistic code; it also concerns different cultural values reflected in language use. It lays out the philosophical base for a growing awareness that communicative competence should be conceived as intercultural communicative competence including not only the knowledge of basic values and norms; verbal and non-verbal interactional competence in using English in intercultural communication; competence in using language as social action; competence in creating and interpreting linguistic aspects of social reality, but also the cognitive, affective and behavioural adaptability of an individual’s internal system in all intercultural contexts” (Schinitzer, 1995, p. 38). L<sub>2</sub> learners intending to perform intercultural interactions effectively must possess these abilities to cope with the dynamics of cultural differences on account of the inseparable link between foreign language learning and intercultural communication.

It is apparent that if a teacher determines to maximize students’ communicative effectiveness when interacting with members of other cultures, the students should be offered an opportunity to receive cultural awareness training as an integral part of their English courses. It is

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also to be borne in mind that teaching cross – cultural awareness in the English language classroom is not an easy task.

Teaching a L2 devoid of focus on its speakers’ culture won’t be fruitful. In a similar vein, promoting communicative competence without considering the different views and perspectives of people in different cultures which may enhance or even inhibit communication. After all communication requires understanding and understanding requires the acquaintance with the culture of the foreigner while always putting the target culture in relation with one’s own.

Certain language difficulties Sri Lankan students encounter due to cultural variation between native speakers of English and Sri Lankans are quite apparent in many instances. For example, the expression, ‘going to bed’ referring to the act of sleeping, by native speakers of English may cause some extent of confusion or embarrassment particularly among students from rural areas in Jaffna, as they often lie down on mats or on bare floor, to sleep. Likewise the expressions such as ‘warm welcome’, ‘warm reception’ etc. may suggest pleasantness or cordiality for the English whereas the word ‘warm’ implies discomfort for Sri Lankans because of climatic variation between the western regions and Sri Lanka and the corresponding meaning associated with this word. Another interesting example is the usage of the word ‘owl’ by the English in a particular context. For the English, owl is a symbol of wisdom while the presence and the cry of this bird are regarded as a bad omen or misfortune by Jaffna Tamils.

In such instances, it’s the role of the teacher to explain the cultural variation between languages concerned.

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## CHAPTER- 2

### SCHOLARLY NOTIONS ON COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

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This chapter deals with the findings of various research studies carried out by various researchers, which are partially related to the current topic. This chapter runs into four different sections. The first section comprises research views which maintain that the main objective of L<sub>2</sub> teaching is to develop the learners' communicative competence. The views in the second section are concerned with the claim that communicative competence can be effectively achieved through teaching in real world contexts. The third section presents negative views about communicative language teaching, held by scholars and the author's justifications in favour of the adoption of CLT approach in the classroom. The fourth section deals with how tasks can be effectively exploited in communicative language classes and how computer mediated lessons be successfully taught to develop communicative ability among students

#### **Second Language Teaching**

Mangubhai, Marland and Dashwood (2007) stated that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an approach to teaching secondary languages in elementary and secondary schools has been in practice since the early 1970s, as a result of a greater focus on communication in second language education. This approach recommends extensive interaction in the second language between students and teachers and among students, with advocacy of this method resting on a number of key assumptions such as the following: learning a second language can be facilitated through using the language for communication purposes; such communication should be both authentic and meaningful; a greater emphasis should be placed on language use rather than language knowledge; learner autonomy in language use and learner risk – taking should be encouraged; and fluency and appropriacy in the use of the second language should take precedence over structural correctness. Therefore, CLT incorporates several different techniques and does not insist on the structural set of procedures that teachers should follow.

Canale (1983) noted that communication entails meaning negotiation and continual evaluation on the part of the participants. The characterization of meaning provided by Canale

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verified the fact that communication constitutes a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. Moreover, from a methodological stance it represents a starting point towards the comprehension of the varied factors at play in teaching L<sub>2</sub> students to efficiently communicate in L<sub>2</sub> –which is the ultimate goal of the communicative approach. Unlike previous language teaching methods which focused on grammatical structures and vocabulary, the communicative approach advocates developing the ability to use language in specific communicative contexts. Thus, pursuant of the premises of the communicative approach, the main objective of L<sub>2</sub> teaching is to foster the capacity to communicate in L<sub>2</sub>, as opposed to guaranteeing the assimilation of L<sub>2</sub> structures (Luchini and Garcia, 2007).

Raheem and Ratwatte(N.D, p.23) have stated about the steps taken by the educational authorities in Sri Lanka to promote the communicative competence of students in government schools

“In the school system, a new course in English proficiency, the ‘General English’ course was established in 1999 for the G.C.E (A.L) examination. This course unlike its parallel counterpart, focuses on competence in language skills rather than on an ability to deal with English literature.”

According to Widdowson (1984), the mere utilization of real texts in the classroom does not guarantee that students will learn how to use language to fulfill their communicative needs. He established a contrast between the teaching of language as communication and the teaching of language for communication. He maintained that the goal of L<sub>2</sub> class is to teach language for communication. In other words, it is to promote the communicative abilities which are necessary for coping with real-life situations. Communication is not a simple matter of acquiring knowledge of language items, however they are labeled. It must involve the use of procedures for negotiating meaning within predictable routines.

Widdowson (1972) held the view that the root of the problem, the learners’ deficiency in the ability to use the language lies in the approach itself.

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According to Littlewood (1981), many aspects of language learning can take place only through natural processes which operate when a person is involved using the language for communication and the learners' ultimate goal is to communicate with others. Therefore the research designs to adopt CLT approach to improve students;' communicative competence.

Cumaranatunge (N.D) observed that curriculum change leads to a greater focus on in-service programmes. Today, in Sri Lanka, all aspects of ESL teaching materials, methods, evaluation and teacher education are introduced. However, it is doubtful if the intended objectives of the language planners, curriculum developers and text book writers are realized in the schools. Usually in Sri Lanka curriculum change is implemented through a method called 'Cascade Model.' NIE takes the responsibility of training a small group of personnel at provincial level and then the members of this group brief the proposals to the regions through seminars. But drawbacks of this model are reported as the information regarding the proposals gets diluted and distorted in transmission. Those who are involved in the process of curriculum change are not the people who implement change at grassroots level. In order to effect change at this level more 'teacher-driven' strategies based on collaboration and problem solving which will give teachers a sense of 'ownership' are needed. Even though the current text books including the G.C.E (A.L) General English course book are intended to develop the students' communicative competence, due to the reason as discussed here, teachers fail to handle the text materials properly to reach the intended goal.

Krashen (1988) conveyed that L<sub>2</sub> acquisition is the unconscious process of using language, not directly obtained by conscious learning. Thus the major task for a teacher is to create an environment or a setting for students to acquire English by using it through activities in class. Whether a person is a good language learner or a poor one depends largely on his/her understanding of language. To be regarded as successful language learners, students need to get the information from reading and listening, and express themselves clearly.

However the problem is how to make full use of the limited time in class to improve students' overall language competence by communicating in class. Widdowson (1978) pointed

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out that overemphasis on grammar would lead to prevent the learners from developing their communicative competence. In grammar- translation classes teachers' detailed explanations and exercises of grammar might be a waste of time. In these classes, there is little chance for students to communicate with language.

According to Snow (1996), students learn effectively about language, when they take part actively in the communication with language rather than only passive accepting only what the teacher said. Brown (1991) noted that a language learner can and must take control of his/her own language learning and assume responsibility for his/her success or failure.

Littlewood (1981) described several distinguishing features of CLT. As communicative competence is the desired goal in CLT, meaning is paramount. In socio-cognitive perspectives, language is viewed as a vehicle of conveying meaning, and knowledge is transmitted through communication involving two parts, for example, speakers and listeners, and writes and readers, but is constructed through negotiation. As a consequence, communication is not only a matter of following conventions but also of negotiating through and about conventions themselves. It is a convention –creating as well as convention following activity.

Therefore there are three elements involved in the underlying learning theory: communication principle, task- based principle, and meaningfulness principle. Based on this perception, when applied to language learning, functional activities and social interaction activities are consequently selected according to how well they engage the learner in meaning and authentic language use; learning is interpersonal to learn to communicate; attempt to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning; dialogues, if used, centre around communicative functions and not normally memorized; and contextualization is basic premise; drilling may occur, but peripherally; any device that helps to communicate and understand is acceptable. To some extent, that is to say, students do not simply learn the linguistic structures and grammar rules. Rather they should be actively making meaning through activities such as collaborative problem solving, writing for a purpose, discussion of topics of genuine interest, and reading, viewing and responding to authentic materials.

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Brumfit and Johnson (1979, p.118) claimed: “.....the ability to compose sentences is not the ability we need to communicate. Communication only takes place when we make use of sentences to perform a variety of different acts of an essentially social nature. Thus we do not communicate by composing sentences, but by using sentences to make statements of different kinds, to describe, to record, to classify and so on, or to ask questions, make requests, give orders etc. Knowing what is involved in putting sentences together correctly is only one part of what we mean by knowing a language, and it has very little value on its own; it has to be supplemented by a knowledge of what sentences count as in their normal use as a means of communicating.”

Canagaraja (1992:12) observed, “Presently with the sociolinguistic revolution, language teaching has further shifted emphasis from(grammatical) accuracy to (communicative) fluency. While constant practice and over-learning were encouraged by behaviourist approaches to stamp out errors, the contemporary aim is to get students to meaningfully interact with their contexts to get their communicative goals achieved with the available grammar.”

Allwright (1979, p.167) claimed: “It has been accepted for many years that ‘communication’ is the proper aim for language teaching. More recently increasing attention has been paid to what this might mean if taken seriously. The implied charge that only lip-service has normally been paid to the aim of communication is difficult to prove, but perhaps not so difficult to accept, given that it does seem generally accepted that language teaching globally, has not led to a satisfactory level of communicative skill in the vast majority of cases. Inspection of text books and national syllabuses (as well as of actual teaching) suggests that this failure could be blamed on the apparent failure to ensure that communicative skill is adequately represented in language courses. Text books and national syllabuses, typically and for obvious reasons, present an analysis of language rather than of communicative skill. To put the position very simply, ‘communication’ has become fully accepted as an essential and major component of the ‘product’ of language teaching, but it has not yet been given more than a token place, as an essential and major component of the ‘process’. A logical extension of the argument would suggest that if communication is the aim, then it should be the major element in the process.”

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Canale and Swain (1980) remarked that communicative competence was understood as the underlying system of knowledge and skill required for communication (e.g. knowledge of vocabulary and skill in using the sociolinguistic conventions for a given language) Furthermore a distinction was drawn between communicative competence and what is here labeled actual communication – the realization of knowledge and skill under limiting psychological and environmental conditions such as memory and perceptual constraints, fatigue, nervousness, distractions and interfering noises. The term actual communication is preferred here. Canale and Swain emphasized that communicative competence is an essential part of actual communication but is reflected only indirectly, and sometimes imperfectly (e.g. in random and in advertent slips of the tongue, mixing of registers) due to general limiting conditions such as those mentioned above.

Allen and Widdowson (1979) stated that in recent years English language teaching overseas has taken on a new character. Previously, it was usual to talk about the aims of English learning in terms of the so – called ‘language skills of speaking, understanding speech, reading and writing, and these aims were seen as relating to general education at the primary and secondary levels. Recently, however a need has arisen to specify the aims of English learning more precisely as the language has increasingly been required to take on an auxiliary role at the tertiary level of education. English teaching has been called upon to provide students with the basic ability to use the language, to receive and to convey information associated with their specialist studies. This is particularly so in the developing countries where essential teaching material is not available in the vernacular languages. Thus whereas one talked previously in general terms of ELT, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we had such acronymic variants as ESP (English for special Purposes and EST (English for Science and Technology).

Moss (2005) remarked that notions about how best to teach adult English language learner have changed over the years and have been influenced by research in how second languages are learned. Today perhaps the most accepted instructional framework in adult ESL programme is communicative language teaching. The goal of CLT is to increase communicative competence, which means being able to understand and interpret messages, understand the social

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contexts in which language is being used, apply the rules of grammar and employ strategies to keep communication from breaking down. With CLT, instructional emphasis shifted from grammar translation, memorization of dialogues and drills and practice of structural patterns to using language in real life contexts for meaningful purposes. Grammar practice with drills can be appropriate at certain times, but CLT demands authentic use of language, which means people interacting with other people.

The primary principle underlying CLT is that language learners need opportunities to use the language in authentic conversations. After all, daily life requires people to communicate in a wide range of contexts for many diverse purposes. This interactive view of language teaching has its roots in second language acquisition research studies that have examined how interactions contribute to second language acquisition. Studies report how negotiation of meaning an exchange between a speaker and listener to solve a comprehension problem affects what learners produce. Researchers have studied interactions between native speakers and language learners as well as interactions exclusively between language learners. They have also examined social interaction between individual and interaction that occurs in our mind (e.g. the interaction among our knowledge of the first and second languages, the context and context of a message, and our background knowledge).

Khan (2007) stressed that the purpose of any second or foreign language learning should be to enable the learner to acquire communicative competence in the target language so that he can employ the target language for performing the same functions which it performs for the members of the target speech community in everyday life. Language ability involves more than just learning grammar. Grammar and other aspects of language need to be used suitably and meaningfully for different communicative purpose. Thus the focus on learning and teaching should be on learning to use language and not on the knowledge of the language. CLT helps the learner to learn to communicate by communicating. To elaborate the difference between the focus of traditional approach and CLT an analogy of learning driving can be presented. Detailed explanations and description of various parts of the engine of a vehicle can not help a learner to drive a car unless he is actually put to driving the car by using these various parts of the engine,

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and coordinating the functions of all parts of the engine. The goal of CLT is to develop communicative competence of the learner by doing the following.

It helps learner in developing skills for the spontaneous and flexible use of the linguistic system of the target language to express his meanings. It helps him in distinguishing and mastering the communicative functions of the linguistic forms of the target language. Learner develops skills and strategies for effective communication of his meanings. Learner learns the social meaning of the language forms of the target language and can put his language to appropriate use.

Thus learners in learning language through CLT, learns the meaning, functionality and use of the target language and these are the aspects which play an important part in using the language as an instrument for social interaction and functions. To realize this goal of developing learner's communicative competence CLT works on the following principles:

**Communication principle:** This principle holds that learner's participation in activities which involve real communication assists learning of the target language. The implication for the classroom practice is that everything done in the classroom should involve some kind of communication leading to the use of language. This can be realized by involving learners in activities like role – play, games and problem – solving tasks. To be truly communicative, these activities should have the quality of information gap, choice and feedback. These qualities generate the need for communication for the learners and brings into play the abilities and skills which can ultimately culminate in the development of the communicative competence in the target language.

Erton (2007) emphasized that in order to communicate successfully in the target language, the pragmatic competence of the language learner must be well developed. Thus the grammar of the target language should not be taught in isolation with its use. In this respect, it may be important to remember that grammatical competence is to recognize and produce grammar structures and rules for effective and meaningful communication. The learner should

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have the ability to put the knowledge of the language into practice. Such an experience can take place in different communicative settings and situations. That is to say that the language course should be designed to provide learners the opportunity to learn and practice different functions of language.

This simply reflects the idea that form and function go hand in hand in language teaching. The functional study of language means, studying how language is used. For instance, trying to find out what the specific purposes that language serves for us, and how the members of a language community achieve and react to these purposes through speaking, reading, writing and listening. Therefore in order to structure a good pragmatic competence, functional study of the target language should be one of the vital goals of the language curriculum. In this way, however, the language learner not only learns to participate according in classroom discussions, but also experiences the ways of interaction in natural settings.

May (1993) observes that it is possible to distil a number of activities that are useful for pragmatic development for the foreign language teaching. Some of these have already been mentioned, however, activities aimed at raising students' pragmatic awareness should also be taken into account. The term awareness raising is used for activities which require the development of socio pragmatic and pragma – linguistic knowledge of the language learner, a variety of tasks could be assigned to students for practice. To illustrate, students can be assigned to observe the particular pragmatic features in the spoken, written or audiovisual sources.

In this case, open observations (observing the education in a village, observing the ways of interaction at a train station) provide the opportunity to experience different context and discourse factors in the target language. Such observations enable the language learner develop his / her socio – pragmatic competence. On the other hand studying the contexts in which different functions of language are used to enable to study a combination of socio pragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects in the target language. By focusing on what the student has learned from those observations help learners to establish the connection between pragmatic functions and linguistic forms. Such a study also enables the way to experience different social contexts

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and cultural meanings. Linguistic behaviour is social behaviour. People talk because they want to socialize in the widest possible sense of the world: either for fun or to express themselves to other humans or for some serious purposes, such as building a house, closing a deal, solving a problem and so on. Thus language is a tool for human beings to express themselves as social creatures and the language used in that particular context is important in terms of linguistic interaction that takes place. Such a context naturally presupposes the existence of a particular society, with its implicit and explicit values, norms, rules and laws and with all its particular conditions of life. However the actual development of the pragmatic competence is to learn to communicate meaning appropriately in the target language.

Harlow (1990) maintained that most importantly both teachers and text books alike need to emphasize to the learner that language is composed of not just linguistic and lexical elements; rather, language reflects also the social context, taking into account situational and social factors in the act of communication. Since pragmatic competence is a combination of these factors, the development of the pragmatic ability should be accepted as one of the primary teaching goals. If considered carefully, the students find the opportunity to experience language in different social contexts; they practice functions of language in a variety of interactional patterns, by using the right utterance at the right time; they learn how to be socially responsible language learners. Moreover the study of different communicative patterns not only helps students to be the active participants in the classroom but also encourage them to think critically and creatively in foreign language. In sum, language learning is a socio – cultural process which requires the application of linguistic rules in a variety of contexts, audiences and purposes. The development of the pragmatic competence is with all its aspects helps the language learners to broaden their education and shape their world views.

If the language learner does not achieve most of these goals through the language learning process, the result will absolutely be a pragmatic failure. In other words, it is the misunderstanding or the lack of the ability to understand the message uttered by the speaker. Although an utterance is grammatically well formed it may be functionally confusing or contextually inappropriate. Therefore the message conveyed by the speaker can be

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grammatically accurate but because of the contextual factors the message might sound inappropriate. The reason of this inappropriateness can result from social factors (traditions, customs, values, etc.), the lack of interpersonal skills, cultural differentiations, lack of critical and creative thinking etc. Therefore, it should be borne in mind that the development of the pragmatic competence in language learning and teaching today is very indispensable, because pragmatic competence not only shapes the world view of the individual through language but also provides teachers the opportunity to better understand their students by keeping in mind the necessary interactional, psychological, social and cultural factors in language teaching pedagogy.

Sunthareswaran (2004:169) noted the negligence in the part of teachers in adopting proper methods in the classroom in Jaffna schools. “For school students, school text books are used and for the others Head Way series, Oxford English Course and Grammars books of different types are used. Some of their own materials in these classes are mostly based on traditional methods of teaching.”

Krishnaswamy, Verma and Nagarajan (1992, pp. 20 – 21) argued that grammatical knowledge alone is not enough to help us participate effectively in communicative situations. In addition to knowing the forms of a language, one must know the following in order to communicate appropriately.

The socio-cultural situation: the attitudes, values, conventions, prejudices and preferences of the people who use the language.

The nature of the participants: the relationship between the speaker / speakers, and the hearer / hearers, their occupation, interests, socio – economic status, etc.

The role of the participants : the relationship in the social network , like father – son, teacher – student, boss – subordinate, doctor – patient etc.

The nature and function of the speech event: whether it is a face – to – face talk for persuasion, confrontation etc or a casual conversation, or a request in a formal situation or a telephonic conversation, etc.

The mode (medium) of communication: spoken or written or reading from a written script or unprepared speech, etc.

Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence does not capture all the factors mentioned above. Even as late as 1980, Chomsky claimed:

“By ‘grammatical competence’ I mean the cognitive state that encompasses all these aspects of form and meaning and their relation including underlying structures that enter into that relation which are properly assigned to the subsystem of the human mind that relates representations of form and meaning .... Pragmatic competence underlies the ability to use such knowledge along with the conceptual system to achieve certain ends or purposes .... I assume that it is possible in principle for a person to have full grammatical competence and no pragmatic competence, hence no ability to use a language appropriately though its syntax and semantics are intact.” (Chomsky, 1980. p.59 as cited in Krishnaswamy, Verma and Nagarajan, 1992, p. 21).

Hymes (1971, as cited in Krishnaswamy, Verma and Nagarajan, 1992. p.21) on the other hand said that one who studies language should be able

“... to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events and to evaluate their accomplishment by others.”

Sunthareswaran (2004) explained about certain drawbacks in the Sri Lankan educational system which inhibits the promotion of communicative competence among students. The text series 'Let's learn English' used in the primary classes in Sri Lankan schools aims to promote communicative skills. In the foreword to these series it is stated "This new series of text books-Let's learn English will promote formal learning of English by strengthening the communicative abilities of the pupils." Yet sometimes these text books do not reach students in time and in most schools there is a dearth of competent English teachers and in some schools the methods employed and the approaches to teaching of English have been found to be unsuccessful.

### **Teaching / Learning in Real World Contexts**

Engaging students in activities which are closely related to their day – to – day experience may be effective means to develop their communicative competence. Such activities may provide exposure as well as motivation for interaction among them and between the teacher and them. Learning environment which is relevant to the familiar experience of students will make them actively take part in the classroom sessions. It is believed that it will enable them to communicate in the target language outside the classroom with confidence and fluency. In this section, some views of linguists which endorse the notion that teaching / learning in real world context would give ample opportunities for learners to use the language meaningfully and appropriately sociolinguistically, are presented.

Palmer (n.d. as cited in Rivers, 1983) suggested what he called communication practice drills. In communication practice drills, the students find pleasure in a response that is not only linguistically acceptable, but also conveys information personally relevant to himself and other people. He maintained that the most powerful technique at the teacher's disposal is his ability to verbally create situations which could be relevant to the students' own life and then to force the students to think about the meanings and consequences of what he would say in such situations.

Khan (2005) claimed that CLT theory proposes a focus on learning; it holds that learning is likely to happen when classroom practices are made real and meaningful to learners. CLT sets the goal of language learning to use the language effectively for learners' real communication needs. This goal is consistent with the long – term goal if not the immediate goal, of English language instruction in many contexts of the world. Thus while teachers in many parts of the world may reject the CLT techniques transferred from the west, it is doubtful that they reject the spirit of CLT.

Newmark (1968 as cited in Brumfit and Johnson, 1979, p. 163) stressed that since the actual classroom is only one small piece of the world in which we expect the learner to use the language, artificial means must be used to transform it into variety of other pieces; the obvious means for performing this transformation is drama – imaginative play which has always been a powerful educational device both for children and adults. By creating a dramatic situation in a classroom in part simply by acting out dialogues, but also in part by relabeling objects and people in the room to perform for imaginative role-playing – the teacher can expand the classroom indefinitely and provide imaginatively natural contexts of the language being used.

Rivers (1983) wrote that in recent writings on second language teaching, there has been increasing emphasis on communication and what have been called communication skills. Participation in the drill can be innovation: providing for practice in the repetition and variation of language segments, but with simultaneous practice in selection, as students express their own meanings and not those of a text book writer. Practice in selection should not be considered a separate activity for advanced classes: it can and should be included in class work from the very first lesson. The more students are interested in an activity in the target language, the more they feel the desire to communicate in the language and this is the first and the most vital step in learning to use language forms spontaneously.

Unlike activities in traditional settings, communicative activities are meaningful (Nunan, 1991). They incorporate many features of authentic communication such as information

gap, choice and feedback. They enable learners to negotiate the meaning, to nominate a topic and to follow up as opposed to mechanical drills which allow learners little more than responding.

Group work and pair work are maintained to maximize students' involvement in practicing genuine communication as well as to increase student – talk time (Long, 1977).

Larsen Freeman (2000) pointed out that in the communicative language classroom, the learner is more than a passive recipient : she/he is an active participant. The communicative teacher, in turn is an initiator of situations which engage learners in language production: a facilitator of the process of communication as well as its participant.

Chaudron (1977) illustrated that the new roles for teachers and students consequently create a new classroom atmosphere drastically distinguished from that existing in the traditional setting. CLT promotes a cooperative learning environment where teachers and learners support each other, and work together. In this environment, students have no fear of failure and they feel free to communicate. This also means that errors in communicative language classroom are treated differently. The traditional way of correcting learners' every single error immediately doesn't let them understand their mistakes. Moreover, it suppresses learners' motivation to speak out. On the other hand, error correction in the communicative language instruction facilitates language acquisition by taking the form of clarifications confirmations.

Allwright (1979) held the view that in contrast to the grammar – based methodology in which primary emphasis is on mastering grammatical rules, the main concern of the communicative approach is how to use those grammatical rules to produce a meaningful language. Put simply, communicative competence is on target. This shift in a focus from form to function has brought a lot of changes in language classroom instruction. In the classroom where the set goal is to develop learners' abilities to monitor the language, opportunities are provided to engage students in using real communication. That is to say, communicative activities are promoted.

## Negative Concepts of CLT

Several studies have pointed out some problems in implementing CLT, including lack of proper teacher training, teachers' traditional perceptions of the English language teaching, lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials as well as teaching equipment, grammar based examinations and syllabuses, lack of teachers' contribution to designing an innovation, learners' resistance to new methodologies, teachers' low English proficiency, large classes and needs for the English language.

Duquette (1995) noted that despite the use of CLT approaches in schools for over three decades, claims are still being made that CLT approaches are not effective in elementary and secondary classrooms and that many teachers remain uncertain about the concept of CLT and about implementing it in classroom. Such claims have been indeed a constant refrain in the CLT literature over the last twenty years. Communicative classrooms are rare and that while most teachers profess to be following a communicative approach, in practice, they are following more traditional approaches. In a parallel line of thought, Thornbury (1998) claimed that “from a communicative approach, CLT (in classroom usage) is not only weak but very weak” (p. 110), a judgment based on his observation of EFL classrooms in elementary and secondary schools and pre- and in-service teacher education courses over 20 years. A similar comment surfaced again in 2002: “Despite the theoretical development of communicative language teaching, understanding among practitioners remains limited. Moreover a growing number of studies indicate that classrooms in which CLT is effectively used are rare” (Sato, 2002, p.41).

Misconception about CLT or the pessimistic attitude toward CLT is a purely owing to the failure in educational policies in organizing necessary training for teachers to adopt CLT approach in ESL classrooms, making CLT based teaching materials and student work books available and a lack of clear perception about the actual objective of CLT among teachers.

Further, as far as the schools in the Jaffna district are concerned, educational authorities are not interested in conducting periodical monitoring to find out which type of teaching method is followed by teachers of English. Hence teachers take the liberty of having



their own choice of methodology. In fact, communicative language teaching would be thoroughly successful if proper and regular training in handling CLT classes is provided to teachers, carefully and thematically designed text books are made available to teachers in time, and seminars and workshops are periodically arranged to enable teachers to attain a better understanding and rationale behind CLT approach.

There is another argument put forward by Grenfell and Harris (1999) who have claimed that CLT describes competence or proficiency or what it consists of, but is not, itself, a means to acquiring it. They argue that statements of the type “Using skills is the means to learning them and learning is the means to their use” (p. 28), are circular. Their circularity makes them devoid of any meaning that can be used practically by teachers in classrooms.

In the view of the author, the above argument that CLT fails to enable students to acquire the language, becomes invalid. In fact, CLT approach recommends the introduction of real life situations in the ESL classrooms with the sole intention of motivating the students to use the second language in a natural environment as they use their first language.

A third reason for the alleged drawback of CLT is associated with the contexts in which it has been used. In some Asian context, there has been only a partial acceptance by the teachers of the legitimacy of CLT, which is a predominantly Euro – centric approach to language teaching. Anderson (1993) and Chowdhury (2003) opposed the practice of CLT, stating that it challenges traditional cultural beliefs and values and is at odds with traditional relationships between teachers and students.

The above deficiency of the CLT may be accepted. In order to overcome this issue, the author suggests that native cultural elements and conventional models need to be incorporated into the syllabus of CLT to be adopted in the local context. In this manner, the possible culture shock the students may suffer in the language class due to the cultural variation between the natives and foreigners could be eliminated.

Stern (1992) argued that despite outstanding characteristics, CLT needs appropriate vocabulary for functional language use but it gives little guidance about how to handle vocabulary. However it has been realized that more exposure to language and practice with functional communication will not ensure the proficiency in language learning.

Therefore the best way to handle the ESL classes is to include an effectively worked out selection of vocabulary, according to frequency and an instruction methodology that encourages a meaningful engagement with words.

### **Significance of Tasks in CLT**

The growing interest in tasks originates largely from the communicative approach to language teaching. Almost everything that is performed in the classroom is underpinned by beliefs about nature of language and about language learning. Dramatic shifts in attitude towards both language and learning can be observed in recent times. This has sometimes resulted in contradictory messages in teaching profession which in turn has created confusion.

It has been acknowledged that language is more than simply a system of rules. Language is regarded as a fertile source for the creation of the meaning. In the process of learning, one is expected to understand clearly the distinction between “learning what” and “knowing how”. In other words, one should distinguish between knowing various grammatical rules and have the ability to use the rules effectively and appropriately when communicating.

Pedagogically, task based language teaching has strengthened the following principles and practices.

- A need – based approach to content selection.
- An emphasis on leaning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language, but also on the learning process itself.

- An enhancement of the learners' own personal experiences as important contribution elements to classroom learning.
- The linking of classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom.

(Nunan, 2006, p. 3)

Such task-based language teaching is believed to develop language acquisition by (a) providing learners with opportunities to make the language input they receive more comprehensible, (b) furnishing contexts in which others can understand and (c) making the classroom closer to real-life situations.

### **Definition of Tasks**

Tasks have been defined in various ways. Nunan (2004) drew a basic distinction between real world or target tasks and pedagogical tasks. Target tasks refer to uses of language in the world beyond the classroom. Pedagogical tasks are those that occur in the classroom.

The following is another definition of pedagogical task.

“... any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. ‘Task’ is therefore assumed to refer to a range of work plans which have the overall purposes of facilitating language learning – from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem – solving or simulations and decision – making” (Breen, 1987, p.23).

This definition appears to be very broad and it implies that just about anything the learner does in the classroom qualifies as a task. In fact, it can be used to justify any procedure at all as ‘task – based’, and as such, is not particularly helpful.

Ellis (2003, p. 16) defined task thus.

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“A task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes”.

Nunan (2006, p. 5) defined task in the following manner:

“A task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the attention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, middle and an end”.

Lambert (2004, p. 18) maintained that “Communicative tasks are some pedagogical tasks which are effected through a planned diversion in the information held by learners, and which usually approximate to some extent to a real world task which learners will encounter outside the classroom. The need to share information requires learners to communicate functionally in a second language and the link with the real world enables them to acquire task specific language and skills.”

### **TBLT (Task Based Language Teaching) and CLT**

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TBLT is based on the development of CLT, input and interactionist theory and learning theory. Its focus is on both learning by doing things meaningfully. The chief aim of TBLT is to integrate all four skills and to provide learners with opportunities to experiment with and explore both spoken and written language through learning activities designed to engage learners in the authentic, practical and functional use of language meaningfully to develop learners' communicative competence and in this process, a variety of tasks offers immense flexibility and the teachers will be able to design communicative tasks and lead to more motivating activities for the learners, as well. Teaching becomes a process of fulfilling tasks by using the target language under the communicative task design. Thus, how to design appropriate communicative tasks becomes a major problem in implementing this approach.

In the task-based language teaching, content of the syllabus and instructional processes are selected in relation to communicative tasks which learners will need to engage in outside the classroom and also in relation to theoretical and empirical insights into those social and psycholinguistic processes which facilitate language acquisition. This approach to language teaching includes the ideas of learning theories of Piaget's cognitive theory and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (WANG, 2006, p. 11).

Piaget explained that overall development is the result of children's interaction with their environment, with a complementary interaction between their developing perceptual cognitive capacities and their linguistic experience.

Piaget laid emphasis on the constructive nature of the learning processes. That is individuals are actively involved in constructing personal meaning right from birth, which is their personal understanding from their experiences. Another cognitive psychologist, Vygotsky affirmed that cognitive development and learning originate in a social context (Vygotsky, 1978). He assumed that higher psychological functions such as learning develop in interaction between individuals. He hypothesized the existence of a zone of proximal development (ZPD) where functions learnt in a social dimension are transferred to a cognitive dimension. This theory implies that a learner learns under the guidance of an expert who provides assistance and support

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by adjusting the difficulty of the task. Since a language classroom can also be considered as a social environment, the phenomena of interaction taking place there can be studied in the light of this theory.

Vygotsky (1978) agreed with many of Piaget's ideas about how children learn, but he emphasized more on the social context of learning. Piaget's cognitive theories have been used as the foundation for designing learning models in which the teacher's role is limited. In Vygotsky's theories, teachers as well as older or more experienced children play very important roles in learning. Much overlap between cognitive constructivism and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory is found. However, Vygotsky's constructivist theory, which paves the way for an active, involved teacher. According to Vygotsky, the culture offers the child the cognitive tools needed for his development. The type and quality of these tools determine, to a much greater extent than they do in Piaget's theory, the pattern and role of the development. Adults like parents and teachers are conduits for the tools of the culture, including language. The tools of the culture provided to a child include cultural history, social context and language. Currently they also include electronic forms of information access.

Vygotsky's concept, the 'zone of Proximal Development' is supposed to be best known. It maintains that students with the help from adults or more advanced children, can master concepts and ideas which they can't understand on their own. No individual is able to achieve the full extent of his / her learning potential, but people can continue to develop their cognitive capacity throughout their lives and their social interaction. A social constructive model of the teaching – learning process, supported by social – interactive and constructive theory has come into being. It emphasizes the dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners and tasks, and provides a view of learning as arising from interactions with others. In this model, learner is an active meaning – maker and problem solver and tasks involve input in the form of a piece of text or language. Activities which are the cognitive process needed in order to carry out the activities which are incorporated to them. Together with the other two key factors, teachers and context, they interact as part of a dynamic ongoing process.

In the view of Ellis (1999, as cited in WANG, 2006), the Input and Interactionist Theory is the theoretical base of task – based approach. The explanation of Input and Interactionist Theory which Krashen emphasizes refers to using language to learn and then learning to use language. Krashen and other L2 acquisition theorists stress that language learning comes about through using language communicatively, rather than through practicing language skills. In other words, one acquires a language mostly as the result of using language in the process of communicative activities, not the result of conscious language drilling.

In the view of Krashen (N.D., as cited in WANG, 2006, p. 13), one acquires a language through subconscious acquisition process not our conscious learning process. Language acquirers are consciously unaware of the grammatical rules of the language, but rather develop a sense for correctness. In a plain sense, acquisition is “picking – up” a language. On the other hand, language learning refers to the conscious knowledge of a foreign language, knowing the rules, being aware of them and being able to talk about them.

Krashen also claims that students must receive comprehensible input to acquire a language. According to the hypothesis, a language acquirer who is at level “I” must receive comprehensible input that is at level “i+1”. In other words, one acquires only when one understands language that contains structures that is ‘a little beyond’ where one is now. This understanding is possible due to using the cultural background of the language one hears or reads and one’s knowledge of the world.

Some deficiencies of Krashen’s comprehensible input theory have been brought out by critics. They disagree with that more exposure to input, even if comprehensible can promote language learning. Learners do not have the access to interact with the source of language when reading a book, watching a T.V. programme or listening to a radio broadcast. In these instances, communication is one-sided. They do not have any means to express that they haven’t understood the message, to seek clarification or repetitions. On such grounds, Long (1983), while accepting the comprehensible input theory, intended to study how input is made comprehensible. His research findings are evidence of how native speakers consistently modify

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their speech when they interact with non – native speakers. Most native speakers naturally adapt their speech to the needs of the non – native speakers, for sake of facilitating communication.

In the view of Long (1983, pp. 177-193) only “Conversational interaction” promotes language acquisition. He also believes that the necessary language acquisition device is “modified interaction” which concerns (1) the modified interaction may make the input comprehensible; (2) the comprehensible input is good for language acquisition; (3) modified interaction benefits language acquisition. Hence, in ELT, the activity should be designed with the modified interaction (task) so that learners can naturally acquire language through the conversational interaction.

The great advantage in the task-based language teaching is that language learning in classrooms is made parallel to the natural route and higher rate of language acquisition can be reached as it provides learners with a clear communicative goal, interaction is needed to reach the goal, and comprehensive input can occur, and then language acquisition is facilitated.

Shavelson and Stern (1981, p.478 as cited in WANG, 2006, p. 21) suggested that tasks design should incorporate the following elements:

1. Content – the subject matter to be taught.
2. Materials - the things that learners can observe / manipulate.
3. Activities - the things the learners and teacher will be doing during the lesson.
4. Goals - the teacher’s general aim for the task (they are much more general and vague than objectives).
5. Students - their abilities, needs and interests are important.
6. Social community - the class as a whole and its sense of “groupness”.



According to Wright (1987), tasks minimally include two elements, one the input data provided by materials, teachers or learners, and an initiating question instructing learners on what to do with the data.

Candlin (1987) maintained that tasks should include input, role, settings, actions, monitoring, outcomes and feedback. Input is the data provided to learners to work on. Roles refer to the relationship between participants in a task. Setting refers to the classroom out – of – class arrangements decided in the task. Actions are procedures and sub – tasks which the learners are to perform. Monitoring is the supervision of the task in progress. Outcomes are the goals of the task and feedback denotes the task assessment.

Nunan’s publication, *Designing Tasks for the communicative classroom*, was brought out in 1989. This manual is treated as a milestone of task – based approach to language teaching. In this work, Nunan has produced a framework for analyzing communicative tasks and tasks are analyzed based on their goals, input data, activities, settings and roles.

Two principal aspects of communicative tasks, (1) the distribution of task – essential information and (2) the goal orientation of learners are discussed by Long (1983). With regard to distribution of task-essential information, “one-way” tasks and “two-way tasks” are discussed by Long. In “one-way” tasks, one learner holds all task-essential information and communicates it to the others and in “two-way” tasks, task-essential information is distributed between learners, requiring them to share and integrate it. As with goal orientation, there is the reference to “open” task in which learners know that there is no correct solution to the task and “closed” task in which learners know that there is only one or a small range of solutions.

Yule (N.D, as cited in WANG, 2006) provided a second typology of communication tasks. He proposed three task types, i.e., descriptive, instructional and narrative and argued that discourse skills necessary for descriptive tasks are included in instructional tasks and that the skills for both are entailed in narrative tasks. The typology of Pica et al (as cited in WANG, 2006) demonstrated how learners need to interact on individual tasks and Yule’s typology

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provided a basis for sequencing tasks developmentally. The typology of Pica et al and Yule are representative of current practice in foreign language instruction.

Lambert (2004) introduced an approach for planning sequences of communicative tasks in which learners become personally involved. By drawing on their own ideas and experience, as a product of earlier tasks in a given sequence, learners generate the content and resource material on which subsequent tasks operate. Lambert, through this approach, believes to increase understanding of the potential of tasks as a planning tool in foreign language or second language teaching and offer some practical examples for teachers and material designers.

Breen (1984, pp. 52-53) proposed a syllabus based on processes rather than products. In his opinion, “an alternative to the listing of linguistic components would be to: prioritize the route itself; a focus upon the means towards the learning of a new language. To this effect, the learner would give priority to the changing process of learning and the potential of the classroom – to the psychological and social resources applied to a new language by learners in the classroom context – a greater concern with capacity for communication rather than repertoire of communication, with the activity of learning a language viewed as important as the language itself and with a focus upon means rather than predetermined objectives, all indicate priority of process over product”.

Breen (1984) opined that with regard to communication at the center of curriculum, the goal of that curriculum (individuals who are capable of using the target language to communicate with others) and the means (classroom activities which develop this capability) begin to merge; the syllabus must take account of both the goals and the means.

Subsequent to the introduction of CLT, the place of grammar in the curriculum was not firm. Teaching of grammar was felt to be unimportant by some linguists in the beginning. They also believed that if the learners paid much concentration on meaning in using the language to communicate, their ability to use a L2 would develop naturally. Recently their assumption has suffered criticism and nowadays, there is emphasis on tasks that prompt learners to focus on

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form. It is also widely accepted that knowledge of grammar gains significance using language for communicative purposes.

Littlewood (1981) stated that the following skills are essential in CLT. The learner should reach a good level of linguistic competence. He must have the ability to manipulate the linguistic system of the target language to use it spontaneously and flexibly so as to bring out what he intends.

The learner must have the ability to distinguish between the forms he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence and the communicative functions that such forms are to perform.

The learner should practice necessary skills to use language for communicating meanings effectively in real situations.

The learner must inform himself of the social meaning of language forms. Hence the learner will achieve the ability to choose the socially acceptable forms and get rid of offensive expressions.

Thus it is understood that any comprehensive curriculum is to entail both means and goals and consider both product and process.

Undoubtedly CLT has had a tremendous impact on both methodology and syllabus design, and has promoted the status of learning “task” in the curriculum and TBLT contributes to the perfection of CLT approach.

As discussed above, Nunan (2006) suggested that learners should focus more on meaning rather than on form. CLT has been generally blamed for giving priority to fluency and not accuracy. This result seems to be the result of the fact that when learners communicate in the classroom, their performance is assessed according to their communicative effectiveness. The definition of Nunan may be considered to reinforce the misunderstanding about the role of

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fluency and accuracy in CLT. In fact, Nunan's definition emphasizes the need of a non – linguistic purpose of the task and it doesn't mean that form can be ignored in the learner's language.

The issue whether the focus should be on form or on meaning has been under discussion. According to most applied linguists, both are important. However they do not fail to stress that grammar should not be presented out of context. In fact, effective language use involves achieving harmony between form and function. Learners should be made to realize that different forms could be used to express different meanings in different circumstances. At the same time, when a task or an activity is designed, a good guidance to each task, even a subtask is usually shown during teaching or learning so that learners understand and use language effectively in the communicative activity, through a series of sound task practice.

Learners can perform better if their attention is drawn to some typical features of language form.

Language data can be of two categories, 1) authentic data and 2) non – authentic data. Authentic data include the speaker and written language specifically prepared for the purpose of language teaching. Authentic data are genuine English expression. They are the result of real communication between two or more individuals. Non-authentic data entail the speaker and written texts and other samples language specially intended for the classroom use.

Non-authentic data becomes a good source that provides learners with examples of target grammar and vocabulary in text that would enable learners to understand and process the language. Thus they serve as fine means for learners particularly in the beginning of learning.

It is equally important for the learners to make use of the authentic data also. In the authentic data, target language items in contexts where they naturally occur are presented to learners. If learners do not have the access to authentic materials in the classroom, they will have to encounter many difficulties when they involve in real communication outside the classroom.

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When a task is designed, the relevance of the authenticity with the contents of the text should be taken into account so as to enable the learners to practice a language in an authentic language situation.

## **Input**

It is generally accepted in second language theories that pertaining to the learning of a modern language learners must be exposed to sufficient language input either in artificial or natural teaching settings. Ellis (1999) stated that input refers to the language that is addressed to the FL learner either by a native speaker or by another F.L. learner. Input also means the language that the students hear or read. It should contain some new information that the learners have not known. In other words, the input should be at a higher level that the student is capable of using, but at a level he is capable of understanding. It is called “rough – tuning” and compared to the way adults talk to children. Students can acquire language on their own if they are provided with a great deal of comprehensible input.

Two different types of input are termed as roughly-tuned input and finely-tuned input. The roughly-tuned input refers to a language at a level a little above the learners’ abilities and finely-tuned input is language to be selected precisely to be at exactly the learners’ level. In the current context, finely – tuned input is considered to mean the language selected for conscious learning and teaching.

## **Communication through Listening Activities**

Most of the learners will be interested in spending more time to listen to the L2 than to produce it. They must understand what they listen during face-to-face interaction. Also they will have to silently receive messages channeled to them from radio, television, seminars etc. In the view of some, listening is a passive skill. This is misleading since listening involves active involvement of the hearer. The hearer must possess both linguistic and nonlinguistic knowledge to understand the speaker’s intended meaning. During the course of an interaction, he may have the access to many clues to receive the message. However he should be made aware that all clues are not equally relevant to the message. Thus even if he misses a portion of language, he need

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not bother about it as other clues will be helpful to him to know the message. It is also to be borne in mind that knowing the whole message may depend on this particular missed item. This won't affect the general point being made here since the learner will soon realize his own misunderstanding if he keeps himself involved in the communication rather than allowing himself demotivated due to a sense of failure (Maley & Duff, 1978).

In order to make listening to be active, the learner must be motivated by a communicative purpose. This purpose will determine what meanings he must listen for and which parts of the spoken text are most important to him. For example, there may be parts on which he need not focus attention for every detail, but only listen for the general gist. There may be other parts which require him to listen for more detailed information. There are even other causes where he must listen for specific pieces of information out of the text.

The most popular and familiar activity for providing a purpose for listening is by means of questions which prompt learners to listen for specific information or to make inferences from what they hear.

Following are some activities through which learners can develop their listening skills (Littlewood, 1981, pp. 68-73).

1. Performing physical tasks (e.g. selecting pictures)
2. Transferring information (e.g. tabular form)
3. Reformulating and evaluating information.

In these activities, the main focus is on listening for functional information. Some techniques applied in these activities can be used to motivate learners to listen for social meanings also.

## Choosing Course Content

A communicative approach does not abandon the inclusion of structural aspects to its course content. Mastery of the structural system is still considered the basic requirement for using language to communicate one's own meanings. Yet, a communicative approach stresses the idea of going beyond structures and taking account of other aspects of communication. Thus it enables us to relate the content more closely with the actual communicative uses. For example,

When deciding which linguistic forms should be emphasized within a limited time, the teacher can give priority to those which seem to offer the greatest value in broadening the learners' communicative capacity. For example, 'can + infinitive' can be used to express several important communicative functions. Hence the teacher may focus more on this pattern. Whereas the teacher need not emphasize much on the distinction between 'I will' and 'I shall', since it is not so important for effective communication.

When designing creative activities, the teacher may take learners' probable needs into consideration. For example, in discussions and problems – solving activities, topics related to learners' interests can be incorporated. In role – playing activities, situations and topics which the learner will encounter outside the classroom can be included (Littlewood, 1981, p. 77).

In this section we have discussed how communicative approach can be used to make the content of a course to reflect not only the structural demands of the L2, but also the communicative demands of learners. However it should be noted that the exact nature of these demands cannot be predicted since they depend on the uncertainties of day – to – day life and communication. The learner should have the ability to negotiate these uncertainties and this ability partly depends on whether we have exposed him to particular portions of relevant language. In addition, it depends on his creative ability for using the L2 grammatical system to communicate new meanings in unpredicted situations.

## **Organizing Course Content**

This section deals with the possibilities of organizing the course content based on the aspects of language use other than the structure of the language.

### **Functional – Structural Organization**

Shaw (1977) held that it is important to organize a course into units based on necessary communicative functions while retaining the structural aspect of the language to be taught. Then the learners will be able to follow the course from function to function rather than from structural pattern to structural pattern. With regard to functional – structural form of organization, the teacher can recycle functions, introducing each time a more complex language to suit the learners' developing linguistic competence. For example, when dealing with 'asking directions' can be first expressed by 'where's the church, please?' later by 'Can you tell me the way to the church, please?' and later still by 'Excuse me, I wonder if you could direct me to the church?' Learners also become aware of the social meaning of alternative forms.

### **Functional Organization**

In a class consisting of learners who have already acquired knowledge of the basic structures of the language, the teacher can decide on a form of organization that represents the communicative uses of the L2. It can be done by relating the course units to communicative functions.

This type of organization implies the functions of English. Each teaching unit relates to a set of communicative functions such as 'offering', 'asking permission' and 'giving reasons' and each function is represented by a series of linguistic forms. Language of widely varying grammatical complexity is thus grouped together for functional purposes. For example, 'asking permission' can be expressed by the simple form 'I'd like to leave early' and the complex 'I hope you don't mind, but would it be at all possible for me to leave early?'



## **Topic-Based Organization**

The course – units can be organized on basis of topics. The teacher can select an area of meaning which he believes useful to learners such as literature or history. He may provide useful language within this area and make learners involve in a variety of practice activities. The activities may include reading, listening, comprehension, discussion and role – playing.

## **The Teacher's Part**

The development of communicative ability occurs through processes inside the learner. The teacher should decide on the kinds of stimulus and experience these processes require and provide them to students. But he shouldn't exercise direct control over them. It is found that even though the teacher applies techniques to influence the course of development, the learner will follow the learning process determined by him. If the environment in which the learning takes place provides necessary stimulus and experience, the learning process can occur without the presence of the teacher. The teacher, further to his role as an 'instructor' is a facilitator of learning. Stevic (1976) summarized the various roles the teacher should assume in the classroom.

As general overseer of his students' learning, he must aim to coordinate the activities so that they can progress toward greater communicative ability.

As classroom manager, he must take the responsibility of organizing activities into lessons satisfactorily at the practical level.

There may be many activities where he must perform the familiar role of language instructor: he must present new language, exercise direct control over the learners' performance, evaluate and correct it and so on.

In other activities, once the teacher has initiated the proceedings, he will not intervene, but will let learning take place through independent activity.

When students are involved in independent activity, he must act as consultant or adviser, giving his help where necessary. He can also move around the classroom to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the learners as a basis for planning future activities.

There may be occasions when he wishes to participate as ‘co-communicator’ with the learners in an activity. In this role, he can stimulate and present new language.

### **Computer Mediated Communication (CMC): Exploiting CMC to Develop Communicative Competence**

Schumin (1997) illustrated that in addition to greater level of exposure to the target language, learners can have more opportunities to participate in the social and cultural context of the target language and learn the pragmatic knowledge, which is very difficult to be achieved in EFL cultures. For example, by using e-mails to send photos, audio or video attachments, learners can introduce their families, countries and cultures to their e pals; by using microphones and web cameras, learners have the opportunities to participate in online communications that is almost similar to the traditional face – to – face conversations although the interaction cannot be as immediate as real – life communications due to transmission time. Nevertheless audio and video communications help learners to obtain both verbal (e.g. intonation) and non – verbal (e.g. facial expression) cues that are essential factors to develop social competency.

### **Use of CMC tools in Language Learning**

By integrating CMC into language learning, learners can be exposed to as much language input as possible and motivated to learn with more interest. In order to maximize the efficiency of CMC in language learning, teachers have to focus on designing learning tasks, monitoring learners’ learning process and evaluating their language progress (Robertson, 2003).

To transform the learned knowledge into competence, adequate opportunities to put the learned knowledge into use is essential. Hence, teachers should design learning tasks with clear objectives and decide on the learning tasks or materials for learners to acquire both the target linguistic and pragmatic knowledge.

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A careful planning on the design of learning tasks would create motivation to learn, among learners. Teachers can involve learners in doing a collaborative project with another learner; for example, the project may be to involve learners in writing a story journal together online. By using the features of blocks, learners can exploit their imagination, exchange ideas online to maintain a story journal together. With motivation, learners will have higher level of enthusiasm in taking part in the discussion and engaging in learning.

Through learning task with a clear objective, it is possible to control the learners' learning progress. If there is no such control, learners may be lost in the process of learning. For example, if a task is not designed to achieve (e.g. to know more about your friend and introduce him/her to the class), learners will get confused about what is needed to be discussed, learned and achieved. They may also face unpredictable difficulties during the interaction which was not taught prior to the task.

In the psychological perspective, when a learner learns a new word, or phrase, initially it is registered in his short term memory and when the learner is exposed to the same term several times, he / she is able to acquire it and store it into his / her long term memory (Moras & Carlos, 2001).

What it implies is that involving learners in a single task will not develop acquisition and competence of the target new language. Therefore it is essential for the teacher to plan several different tasks with the same goal; different tasks with similar goals would provide learners with more exposure and practice and lead them to acquire the target knowledge.

The use of CMC in language learning creates an environment where learners interact between them. In addition to one-on-one e-mail interactions, constructing a discussion board to extend classroom discussion is another way to help develop the learners' ability to express learners' agreement or disagreement with others' opinions. When learners engage in a group discussion on a classroom discussion board, the teacher acts as the key figure to encourage

online opinion exchange and help learners when communication breakdown takes place (Campbell, 2004).

Although the discussion board should be student centred, teachers continue to have great responsibility to monitor learners' interaction and learning progress. For example, when the teacher finds a learner speaking less or not responding to others' opinions, the teacher should induce him to respond to comments (Campbell, 2004).

Whether CMC tools can fully develop learners' communicative competence depends on further research. Nevertheless, the use of CMC tools both inside and outside of the classroom can certainly contribute to the success of learning and develop communicative competence of learners to a considerable extent.

## **Conclusion**

All the above stated views in sections 1, 2 and 3 collectively stress the fact that the main objective of CLT approach is to develop the communicative competence of learners. Proponents of CLT regard CLT as an innovation with many specific features. CLT views language as a tool for communication. It insists that interactional speaking activities in classrooms can be excellent instances of real communication. It also concerns the coordination of the language skills, viz. speaking, writing, reading and listening in order to achieve the communicative competence in a sound manner. It ensures that students have sufficient exposure to the target language. Thus it recommends real world contexts for teaching the language to provide students with proper and adequate exposure. Therefore the application of CLT in classrooms would result in a positive effect on the part of teachers, students and the government. It is also noted that there are some negative views about CLT approach but the implied notions in such negative views emphasize that the grammar is the means through which linguistic creativity is ultimately achieved and an inadequate knowledge of grammar would lead to a serious limitation on the capacity for communication. There is therefore no question that grammar needs to be imparted to target language learners.

## CHAPTER – 3

### FACTORS INFLUENCING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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#### Introduction

In the initial part of this chapter, the current status of English and the historical background of ESL teaching in government schools in Sri Lanka are briefly stated. The decline of English language proficiency among the Jaffna Tamils at present and the reasons for this are specially focused on. Then a theoretical foundation pertaining to the impact of the main factors, viz motivation, attitude and exposure to English in achieving communicative ability has been presented. Finally, factors that impede the development of communicative competence of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka are discussed.

Teaching ESL in government schools in Sri Lanka, irrespective of the socioeconomic and geographical background of students has been a vital concern of successive governments since the early 1950s. Since the 1990s, much emphasis has been laid on ESL teaching in view of solving the Sinhala – Tamil ethnic conflict adversely affecting the economic and social development of the country. In addition, it has been felt that providing students with necessary knowledge and technical skills which the modern employment market demands is crucial. To achieve this objective also, a good knowledge of English is felt essential. Despite the efforts taken by the governments with regard to the school ESL programmes, the overall unsatisfactory performance of students in English in the G.C.E (O/L) and (A.L) examinations and the poor performance of youths in job interviews are evidence of the inefficiency of the programme.

British colonial rule which lasted from 1796 to 1948 in Sri Lanka had a great influence on the status and function of English in this island. The British founded some schools namely the ‘Superior Schools’ that imparted education in the English medium (Jayasuriya, 1976). Only the economically privileged Sri Lankan natives could afford to receive education in these schools by paying a fee. The poor lower class Sri Lankans were deprived of the facility of English medium education which lowered their standard of living.

Gunsekera (2005) remarked, “ From 1796 to 1956, English was the official language of the country. In 1948, when we gained independence from the British, English remained the only official language of the new dominion. In July, 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, Sinhala, Tamil and English are declared official languages of Sri Lanka. In November, 1987, 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, English is the link language and Sinhala and Tamil are the official languages of Sri Lanka.” (p.14)

The link between the English language and the economic status resulted in making English language proficiency a necessary requirement for upward social mobility in the country. This is still the case in contemporary Sri Lanka. In post – independent Sri Lanka, the British education system was subject to many changes.

The local politicians were very much concerned about providing equal opportunities to people of all strata of society. Free education in the vernacular for all in government schools has been prominent among these changes. English instead of being the medium of instruction became one of the subjects in the wider school curriculum; i.e. the second language. Though English has been replaced by the students’ mother tongue as the medium of instruction, the role of English in social life in Sri Lanka is unchallengeable.

Raheem and Ratwatte (2004 as cited in Vignaraja ,2005) remarked that in Sri Lanka the national language policy has quite recently been ignored at the institutional level- in the field of higher education and some of the then existing faculties continue to teach in English. They continue to discuss the influence of the invisible or unplanned forces on language policy and implementation and in Sri Lanka it appears to be moving away from the dictation of the planners to the choice of the individuals. “This is essentially true of the University of Jaffna, in spite of the great hue and cry for a monolingual State, English persists to play the dominant role in most of the academic affairs.” (Vignaraja, 2005:5)

There were different factors that contributed to the influence of English in Sri Lanka. Some members of the middle class used English as the means of establishing their distinct

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identity among the people with whom they lived. Another factor considered sociopolitical is associated with the presence of the separate ethnic groups, the Sinhalese speakers and the Tamil speakers. English became the effective lingua franca between these two communities. The third factor known as ‘reactive’ was determined by external realities. Here the participants have a keen inclination toward the language of power. As Sri Lanka is considered, it’s interesting to note that that the keenness to cultivate English by certain section of people emerged at a time when the language of power was Sinhala and not English.

Samarakkody (N.D:39) stated, “ The position privilege and status occupied by English continued even during the period of post independence nationalism, since the elitism bilinguals of the national bourgeoisie had no desire to do away with the language that had brought them to these positions of power and privilege.”

In Sri Lanka, the direct method and subsequently the grammar translation method had been in practice since English as a second language was included to the school curriculum. The direct method recommends the target language itself as the medium of instruction while the target language is taught in the students’ mother tongue in the grammar translation method. These methods are found to have been unsuccessful in promoting the students’ English language proficiency. Thus the Communicative Language Teaching has been adopted in schools since the late 1980s.

### **Decline of English Language use in Jaffna, Sri Lanka**

During British colonial rule in Sri Lanka (1796-1948), the Governor took the initiative in persuading the American Missionaries to function in Jaffna. The main objective of the Missionaries was to propagate their religious faith. Yet their contribution to the educational development of the Jaffna Tamils was tremendous. Vast employment opportunities and better prospects in life were available for the natives who had English language proficiency. The American Missionary realizing the need of the hour established several schools in various parts of Jaffna.

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Kailasapathy (1986:86 as cited in Sunthareswaran,2004:21) commented, “There was something unique in the educational facilities available in Jaffna during the middle of the last century(19<sup>th</sup> century) that have an important bearing on the relation between Tamil and Western scholarship ----- . Due to a number of factors, some of which were fortuitous and others intrinsically historical, Jaffna was in the forefront of this renaissance. The educational contribution of some of the Christian Missionaries in Jaffna, to this efflorescence cannot be exaggerated.”

A predominantly Tamil monolingual situation in Jaffna today leads to the lesser extent of the use of English in this region. In the government departments and state corporations, the verbal communication among the employees, pertaining to both official and unofficial dealings is entirely in Tamil. Cases of code – switching and code – mixing may be observed but only to a very limited extent. Most of the circulars and notices dispatched are found in Tamil, owing to the state language policy. The 1978 constitution of Sri Lanka declared through its 16<sup>th</sup> amendment passed in 1988 that “Sinhala and Tamil be the languages of administration of all the provinces in Sri Lanka, other than the Northern and Eastern provinces where Tamil shall be so used, etc. All laws and subordinate legislation shall be enacted or made and published in Sinhala and Tamil together with a translation thereof in English. Sinhala shall be used as the language of courts situated in all the areas of Sri Lanka except those in any areas where Tamil is the language of administration” (Thirumalai, 2002). Department meetings and discussions are held mostly in Tamil. In the case of the private sector, the employees of the Colombo based commercial organizations like Brown & Co.Ltd, Singer Co. Ltd, Commercial Bank of Ceylon Ltd etc. and some insurance companies may use English to some extent since they have to communicate with their counterparts in the south in English.

Saravanapava Iyar (2001:149) stated, “In Jaffna, the use of English in the family and friendship domains has been limited to the English educated elite from the British rule. One rarely observes English being used in these spheres by the rural communities, whether agricultural, and fishing groups or sub groups.”

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“In the total Jaffna English speech community, a small minority of these people use English for all communicative purposes.” (Saravanapava Iyar,2001:81)

No public forums or seminars are addressed in English. Even the periodical get – together and meetings of major clubs such as the YMCA, the Lions Club and the Rotary Club are held mostly in Tamil. Very few people read in English. No English Newspapers or magazines are published in Jaffna. Only a few members of Jaffna society subscribe to English newspapers like the Daily News brought from Colombo. People rarely show interest in viewing English T.V.programmes or listening to English programmes on the radio.

Sunthareswaran (2004:80- 82) observed, “English magazines, journals or periodicals are not published in Jaffna since the English reading population is very small now. People in Jaffna do not take much interest in English programmes broadcast by SLBC. On the whole, the use of English in the family domain in Jaffna is very much restricted.”

When commenting on the post-independence status of English, Suseendiraraja (1997, as cited in Sunthareswaran, 2004:74) noted, “English became socially restrictive and did not meet the need for popular participation. The day to day use of English in the Jaffna society was reduced.----- even among the older generation who had their education through English, the need for the use of English has declined considerably. They have given up using English in their conversations and writings as they did earlier because the younger generation is not in a position to respond in English. In fact, the percentage of people who read in English too has become very low. Among the Jaffna Tamil population the regional and national newspapers command the highest circulation as against the national English newspapers published in Jaffna at present.”

Even the teachers of English serving in government schools are not suitably qualified and although they complete courses in training Colleges and Colleges of Education, their competence in English is not satisfactory.

Professional courses like Accountancy, CIMA etc. which are conducted in the English medium are not available in Jaffna presently for want of qualified resource persons in English. But a good number of avenues are open to follow courses in information technology and computer literacy in the English medium. Youngsters show much keenness in following these programmes with the hope of finding job opportunities. Such pursuits of youngsters have undoubtedly led to the progress of English knowledge of youngsters considerably.

Suntharesan (2009) observed that teachers serving in government schools should have a moral consciousness in performing their duties with perfection by covering the syllabus in time, strictly following the instructional guidelines to handle the text books, attending seminars to update their knowledge etc.

Sunthareswaran (2004:176) noted the decline of English language proficiency of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna. “----the overall performance of the students has not been very encouraging in the recent years according to the Instructors and the Head of the ELTC of the University of Jaffna.”

### **The Impact of Social Stratification on Students’ Proficiency in English in Jaffna**

Proficiency in English among school students varies depending on the area or location in which the schools are situated. Classroom conditions and facilities, teaching methods and teachers’ proficiency levels also vary considerably. Although one can assume that an average student after certain years of study, acquires knowledge of basic structures of English, however, it would be a misconception to assume that an average student across different villages, towns and cities knows equally the structures of the language. The following remarks by Thorat (2007, p.2) are worth mentioning in this context. “It is clear to all of us that the standard of English in rural areas in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal is very poor when compared with the skills students in the urban areas demonstrate. Generally the learners in rural areas are poor with not many facilities to improve their performance in studies”

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Since the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna are students from schools situated in different locations and surroundings, their proficiency levels in English are found to vary by the time they enter the university. Their proficiency still varies even during their course of studies in the university due to certain factors which are dealt with later in this section.

People assume various statuses in the social strata and their social roles also vary. The markers of peoples' identity include occupation, education, economic status, gender, age, colour, caste, social rank etc. Linguistic correlation of all these markers can be found at all levels.

The organization of people into hierarchically ordered social groups or classes becomes one of the sources of sociolinguistic identity. Classes made up of people with similar socioeconomic variables in social stratification can be stated in terms of urban versus female etc. Proficiency levels in English found to vary across these variables in turn may lead to students' different attitudes, different levels of motivation and different levels of exposure to English. Besides, the teaching materials used and the teaching methods adopted in the university influence the English proficiency of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna.

### **Urban versus Rural**

When compared with the students from rural areas, students from urban areas have better proficiency. The urban students have more opportunity to use English outside the classroom. In some urban families, students have their personal computers and they are able to learn and use English words and vocabulary items related to information technology. These facilities enable them to have higher proficiency levels in comparison with students from a rural background. It should be noted that in case of the undergraduates of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Jaffna, the majority are from rural surroundings. Canagaraja (1992:15) endorsed it with his observation.

“More of the arts students come from remote rural schools (where English was never taught), their families are uneducated, poorly employed, unexposed to English.”

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Perera (N.D:88) observed, “ ----- in considering the attitudes toward the second language we find two extremes. Where the urban class is concerned the majority have positive attitudes. They are both instrumentally and integratively motivated. Most children have English speaking parents with positive attitudes towards the second language.”

On the other hand, in the rural sector the attitude toward the second language is self evident by the term given to it-“Kaduwa.” The Youth Commission Report (1991:91 as cited in Perera, N.D:88) stated, “The notion of ‘Kaduwa’ has two components. The first refers to the pervasive discrimination in all spheres of life, especially employment, directed against monolingual Sinhala and Tamil speaking youth. The second aspect of ‘Kaduwa’ relates to question of social mobility.”

### **Rich versus Poor**

It’s a usual feature that economically privileged students perform better than economically underprivileged ones across the towns and villages. However, inevitably there are a few exceptions in all areas. But as per observation, students from the upper class are more proficient in English than the middle and lower class students and the middle class students are more proficient than the lower class. McPortland (1991, p.2) supported this notion thus. “The different capacities of poor and wealthy homes to support students’ learning activities continue through the elementary, middle and high school grades. Students from deprived backgrounds may not have a quiet place and home to study while well – to – do students will often have not only a quiet place but also home libraries and computers to support their learning activities. While parents who are not well educated can give strong emotional support in the education of their children, they will not have the academic strengths to help with homework as students progress through the grade levels to more challenging courses.”

Another notable phenomenon of family lineage is education. Particularly students whose parents are educated, have more opportunity to use English in their family environment. This situation enables them to develop their English proficiency and they do better than the students whose parents are not educated.

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The above discussion by no means, implies that all poor students will perform worse than the rich students.

### **Male versus Female**

Sunthareswaran (2004) stated that Jaffna society was traditionally a male- dominated one .Education and employment were considered as the sole concern of the men folk. But due to the influence of Missionaries, females had avenues for English education.

“English education for women prospered earlier and better in Jaffna than in the South--- ‘The Jaffna female Seminary’ a model of women’s education in 1864 provided a complete English education that included French, drawing, Music, Needle work and the making of artificial flowers.” (Gooneratne, 1968 as cited in Sunthareswaran, 2004:23)

The above comments are evidence of the keenness of females of Jaffna society to be proficient in English.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The issue that some students perform well in a subject while others though with similar background, academic preparation and experience encounter more difficulties in learning it baffles most teachers. In the case of the subject being language instruction whether in a native or a second language, a series of factors are involved. One set of factors contributing to the success in language classroom are the attitudes and motivation of both students and teachers. Even though these factors are not only ones that account for differences in classroom processes and student outcomes, it is undeniable that they influence the environment for instruction, teachers’ individual roles and students’ efforts significantly.

According to McKay and Hornberger (1996), there are clear indications that the relationship between a person's prior linguistic and academic experience, the social context of instruction, and the result of formal language instruction has complex and reciprocal correlation with each other. Positive attitudes about language and language learning may be as much the result of success as the cause. However, it should be borne in mind that students with positive general attitudes are not linked with effective strategies that enable them to take advantage of instructional opportunities presented to them. In addition, there are still other factors such as the attitudes and examples of the peers, teachers and parents with respect to language study and social and institutional language policies as reflected in, for example, required courses of language study, both first and second, in schools which affect students. The language study depends also on the social status of the language. The report of McKay and Hornberger (1996, p.19) rightly fits into this context. "Learners of English as a second language are in a rather different situation: their level of comprehension of the standard or any dialect is influenced by amount of exposure to the language. As learners increase in second language proficiency, typically but not always after ever – longer periods of residence in an environment in which the second language is widely used, they become more knowledgeable about and sensitive to dialectal and contextual variation in language."

### **Definition of Motivation**

Theorists find it difficult to reach a consensus on a single definition for motivation. In the view of Gardner (1985,p.10) the term motivation in a second language learning context is found as 'referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity.'

According to Keller (1983), motivation is the degree of the choices people make and the degree of effort they will exert.

Oxford and Shearin (1994) stated that motivation is a desire to achieve a goal combined with the energy to work toward that goal.

Motivation was defined as the impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal seeking acts, by Ames and Ames (1989).

Motivation plays an important role in learning and teaching English as a second language. In the task of encouraging slow learners to work harder, creating an attractive learning atmosphere or rewarding the hardworking students, the role of motivation is felt.

Since motivation is one of the key factors in language learning, the low motivated learners experience difficulties to learn English as a second language. Dornyei (1990) clearly stated that motivation is one of the main determinants of second / foreign language learning.

Oxford and Shearin (1994, as cited in Qashoa, 2006 ; 5) analyzed a total of 12 motivational theories or models including those from socio psychology, cognitive development, and socio-cultural psychology and identified six factors that impact motivation in language learning.

1. Attitudes (i.e., sentiments toward the learning community and the target language),
2. Beliefs about self (i.e. expectations about one's attitudes to succeed self – efficacy and anxiety),
3. Goals (i.e. perceived clarity and relevance of learning goals as reasons for learning),
4. Involvement (i.e. extent to which the learner actively and consciously participates in the language learning process),
5. Environmental support (i.e. extent of teacher and peer support, and the integration of cultural and outside – of – class support into learning experience)
6. Personal attributes (i.e. aptitude, age, sex, and previous language learning experience).

## **Integrative and Instrumental Motivation**

### ***Integrative Motivation***

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Falk (1978, as cited in Norris-Holt, 2001) believed that the most successful learners of a target language are those who like the people who speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society in which the language is used. This form of motivation is known as integrative motivation. When someone becomes a resident in a new community that uses the target language in its social interactions, integrative motivation is a key component in assisting the learner to develop some level of proficiency in the language. It becomes a necessity in order to function socially in the community and become one of its members. It is also theorized that “integrative motivation typically underlies successful acquisition of a wide range of registers and a native like pronunciation” (Finegan, 1999, P.568, as cited in Norris-Holt, 2001).

As far as integrative motivation is concerned, as noted in the previous section, only 2% of the students express clues regarding their integrative orientation. However, it should be borne in mind that the true assessment of the integrative motivation among students in the Jaffna peninsula is impossible owing to the closed avenues for the English oriented programmes and the visit of English speaking Westerners to Jaffna at present. The fact to be recognized in this context is that a genuine assessment of any project is possible only in an environment where all the needed facilities are made available to achieve a target in the project under question. The same is applicable to the assessment of the integrative motivation of the students in Jaffna. Subsequent to the recent end of the civil conflict in the beginning of the year 2009 and the restoration of normalcy in Jaffna, transport services and communication modes have been fast developed. Considerable trade investments and the arrival of experts in various fields including academics, politicians and business magnates in Jaffna are witnessed. Professional courses like CIMA and computer programmes have been introduced and the natives of Jaffna show great interest in being proficient in these fields. Meetings and panel discussions between Southern and Northern authorities are held frequently. The newly transformed situation compelling the need of a lingua franca seems to restore and revive the English environment gradually in Jaffna. Such situation is expected to promote the integrative motivation among students of English as a second language, in Jaffna, in course of time.



### ***Instrumental Motivation***

In contrast to integrative motivation, is the form of motivation referred to as instrumental motivation. This is generally characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a second language. (Hudson, 2000). With instrumental motivation, the purpose of language acquisition becomes more utilitarian, such as meeting the requirements for school or university graduation, applying for a job, reading technical material, translation work or achieving high social status. Instrumental motivation is often characteristic of second language acquisition, where little or no social integration of the learner into a community using the target language takes place or in some instances is even desired.

### **Exposure to Language**

Learners generally do not have sufficient access to the target language outside of the classroom and practice what they have learnt in the classroom. Learners usually step into the real world using their mother tongue soon after they leave the classroom. In classrooms, although teachers now have gradually adopted approaches that focus on meaning and language use, due to the linear mode of face – to – face interaction, the learning outcome is still not efficient enough. Teachers now urgently need a solution to increase exposure and use of the target knowledge both inside and outside of the classroom.

Factors of learners' different personalities, learning and response pace, motivation and language proficiency can all lead to individual inequality to speak up in class or in groups. For example, learners who are shy, slow or afraid of making errors may choose to speak less in the classroom or group discussions. Insufficient access to the target language both inside and outside of the classroom certainly is an obstacle to foster learners' language proficiency.

Sometimes learners' previous language knowledge may help communication to some extent but they have to learn how to use this effectively in real life situation. As long as they make progress in communication, adjustment becomes easier. Language learning means learning to communicate i.e. learning to use language appropriately for the communication of meaning in social contexts.

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## **Extent of the Students' Use of English**

The choice of methodology in the language class depends on the extent of the use of the language of the students in everyday life or outside the classroom. In a monolingual language situation like in Jaffna, students have very limited scope to use English in everyday life. However, owing to the influence of globalization, some students have access to internet, satellite television, mobile phone etc. which provide them knowledge in information communication technology. These students have an opportunity to use English on occasion. This opportunity is not available to all the people across towns and villages. Differences between the urban and rural surroundings and the economically advantaged and the economically disadvantaged people can be observed always.

Vignaraja (2005) commented that though the vernaculars were developed languages, they grew insignificant before the presence of English and they couldn't be the source of modern learning. Though English is declared as a link language its role in domains such as education and law is high. "This could be better evidenced in the University of Jaffna where English dominates in the areas of education and law and plays the minimal role or rather a negligible role as a link language. This may be due to the fact that the region where the Institute is established is predominantly monolingual." (Vignaraja, 2005:2-3)

Nowadays there is a growing tendency of abandoning the 'focus on form' teaching approach such as Grammar Translation and Audiolingualism as more language teachers have observed the failure of form focusing approach in developing learners' communicative ability in real life situations and shifted to adopt the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The CLT approach highlights learners' communicative competence which is defined as learners' ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target language and successfully achieve communication in real life situations. (Hymes, 1972 as cited in Chen, 2005). In order to do so learners are expected not only to acquire the linguistic but pragmatic knowledge of the target language (Hedgecock, 2002). It is suggested that competence, both linguistic and pragmatic, is the knowledge developed and acquired through exposure and use (Kasper, 1997). It has been admitted that without sufficient exposure which is essential for learners to notice and acquire the

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language input and chances to use the knowledge, communicative competence can't be promoted (Chen, 2005)

### **Extent of Students' use of English in the Classroom**

Wang (2006,p.51) said, "In class where all or a number of the learners share the same mother tongue, they may tend to use it; because it is easier, because it feels unnatural to speak to one another in a foreign language and because they feel less 'exposed' if they are speaking their mother tongue."

Many research findings show that students are verbally more comfortable in the bilingual instruction class. Cummins (2004) claimed that when students continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages they gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively. They have more practice in processing language, especially when they develop literacy in both, and they are able to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality. Bilingual students develop more flexibility in their thinking as a result of processing information through two different languages (Cummins, 2004).

Suseendiraraja (1997:11 as cited in Sunthareswaran,2004:164) stated, "We must note that a good section of students have begun to feel that they could study in Tamil, work, earn and prosper in life comfortably. Today the pattern of life in our society is such that only a very few learn English for intellectual satisfaction."

While English can be reserved for certain functions like lecturing, the students' mother tongue can be used for other functions including explaining grammar to students particularly when the grammatical concepts in the target language do not occur in students' first language, explaining tasks to the students, explaining a particular methodology used in class, explaining aims of a lesson, checking students' comprehension etc.

## Students' Use of English in Real Situations

The following remarks by scholars to stress the importance of learners' exposure to the target language to achieve communicative ability in real life situations are appropriate to be quoted here.

“Learners' whole learning system is greatly marked by constraints caused by culture and also lack of institutional supports. Thus language learning becomes incomplete if it lacks the practice in real communication” (Khan, 2005, p.7)

According to Wang (2006) facilities should be made to offer learners sufficient exposure to a considerable amount of language input either in natural or artificial teaching settings. Ellis (1999 as cited in WANG, 2006) considered that input is a term used to refer to the language that is addressed to the foreign language learner either by a native speaker or another foreign language learner. Input also means the language that the students hear or read.

Speaking requires some degree of real time exposure to an audience. Learners are often found to be ashamed about what they are expressing in a foreign language in front of other students in a classroom; worried about making mistakes, fearful criticism or losing face or simply shy of attention that their speech attracts.” (WANG, 2006, p. 50)

Based on the scholars' views, the author sums up that as far as classroom teaching is concerned, bilingual instruction is beneficial in the English language class as students are found to be more comfortable and at ease in following the class. Further, certain teaching items necessarily and inevitably require the use of students' mother tongue for explanation. Use of mother tongue creates a tension free environment that induces students to interact with the teacher and the other students independently. Nevertheless, an adequate exposure to English outside the classroom is recognized as a strong factor that influences the students' use of English in real life situations.

Although difference in the ability of individual adults to learn a second language exists, if enough time and enough opportunity are provided to any adult of reasonable abilities, he can learn to communicate in any language. But the extent of fluency achieved will differ considerably from individual to individual. Motivation is another important factor in language learning and societies that recognize the value of multilingualism will increase the motivation level of learners and thus increase the success of second language learning in general.

Among various methods, the most important tools for adult language learners include exposure.

The views of O'Brien (2002, p.16) are in further support of the importance of exposure in the development of second language learning. "In order to proceed along the 'natural order' of language, a L2 learner needs exposure to L2. The input hypothesis states that this progression occurs when the language "input" is one step beyond the current level of competence. The formula "i + 1" has been used to represent this idea; with "I" signifying the stage the language learner is at and "i + 1" is the level where acquisition would take place."

When considering the formula "I + 1", in the context of the students of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce of the University of Jaffna, learning ESL, "i" may be the exposure to English they receive as they follow their main course of studies in the English medium.

### **Attitude of Students, Teachers and Parents to English**

The entire student population in the University of Jaffna has a positive attitude to the use of English in the classroom and outside the classroom, as well.

Saravanapava Iyar (2001:68), "Even monolingual speakers of Jaffna society had a positive attitude towards English language during the British period. They were not prejudiced against the English language."

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According to the Youth Commission Report (1991, as cited in Perera, N.D.:88), “The liberalization of trade, access to Middle East job market, tourism, mass and electronic media led to a need for English among potential job seekers. This in turn, it is presumed will result at least in instrumental motivation to learn English which once again will create positive attitudes towards the language and its users.”

Sunthareswaran (2004:148) observed, “The teacher of English has a favourable attitude towards the use of English not merely as a subject in the school but also outside the school. It goes unstated that the teacher of English realizes the importance of English as a global language and a medium of higher education better than a teacher of any other subject.”

Sunthareswaran (2004) noted that in Jaffna, parents feel that opportunities are rare for students pursuing their higher degrees in their M.T. which is Tamil. So every parent wants the child to study English earnestly. Despite the cry for posterity and development in their native Tamil language, parents encourage students to study English.

Perera (N.D:94) stated, “---- the most important factor in attitude formation toward the second language is the teacher and the learning situation. Therefore second language teachers have a major role in developing positive attitude in their students toward the target language and thereby facilitating acquisition of the language.”

Perera (N.D:84) remarked, “In spite of nearly a half a century of English for all, 15% of those who sit the G.C.E. (O.L) examination receive zero marks in English. Cumaranatunge (1983:3, as cited in Perera, N.D:84) referring to the second language learner in Sri Lanka stated, “The presence of negative attitude may be one reason why students otherwise competent, reveal low attainment of English.”

Hence the author is of the opinion that the attitude of the learner, the teacher, and the society toward the target language and the community that uses that language as well plays a

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great role in learning that language, In case of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna, they all have a positive attitude toward English. They thoroughly realize the recognition English receives in the international arena, the value assigned to it in the job market and its role as a lingua franca among various communities in the world. Yet the major reason that hinders them from communicating in it is the lack of exposure to English.

### **Correlation between Exposure and Attitude**

Thorat (2007, pp.4-5) summarized the attitudes of the weaker learners in rural areas as follows.

1. English language is considered as an imposition as it is a compulsory subject in the school curriculum.
2. They think since they are not native speakers of English, they may never succeed in mastering it. Thus they lack confidence and joy in learning it.
3. They believe that only intelligent learners can understand English. So they consider that the study of English is beyond their reach.
4. Many learners do not attend English classes as they label these as boring.
5. Many, anyhow, memorize the materials in English and reproduce the answers.
6. Many do not know even the very basic grammatical rules because they never have had an opportunity to use full and complete sentences in English. Their functional contexts do not require or encourage them to use English. If they try to use English, they will be ridiculed by their peers.
7. They are deprived of the opportunities like seminars, group discussions and other similar activities because of their negative approach to the language.

Almost all what is outlined above is applicable to the weak learners of English of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna, also.

Saravanapawa Iyar (2001:114) observed, “In Sri Lanka at present, the learning/teaching of English differs from the situation during the British period. Now the teaching of English is almost confined to the classroom with the limited time and using reinforcement and exposure to English outside the classroom is minimal or nil. On the other hand, M.T. dominates among peer interaction, family affairs and other social domains. In the English classroom also the usage of M.T. is very high. It is true even in the University of Jaffna English language classroom.”

## **Language Exposure and Learning Difficulties**

In the opinion of the author, students' lack of speech skill can be attributed to the lack of opportunities for them to use English. In plain terms, in Jaffna there are no situations that demand them to function in English. For instance, it is their mother tongue, Tamil that is used in work places, shopping activities, domestic circles, entertainment etc. If there is any context that may compel them to use English, they would themselves attempt to use it for satisfying their needs. For example, if they work in an organization where there are employees for whom Tamil is not their mother tongue, English will naturally serve as the link language.

## **Teaching Materials used in the ESL Classroom in the University**

The English Language Teaching Centre of the University of Jaffna does not prescribe any text books to be used in the ESL classes. However, the Lecturers / Instructors in English use certain recommended materials as supplementary readers. These materials including American Kernel Lessons, Changing Times Changing Tenses, Developing Writing and Reading Sampler series do not incorporate elements in their contents to teach communicative competence.

## **Teaching Methods**

Cumaranatunge (N.D) reported that hitherto the favoured method of developing the teachers' professional skills has been the "pull out" model. NIE, The Zonal Directorate or Universities design and conduct courses for teachers. The course-based model is still the widely recognized approach to the development of teachers. These courses come under several categories. The long, award-bearing courses such as the Dip. in TESL or the B.Ed. in TESL are intended to enhance the teachers' qualifications. Other courses of shorter duration are to further develop the teachers' existing skills, such as the course in 'ELT Materials and Techniques.' conducted by the NIE. In addition, there are remedial courses intended to assist teachers in areas in which they face difficulties, and the course in 'Second Language Testing and Evaluation' is of such type. Still there are courses to meet the specific needs of teachers required to take on new

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responsibilities. For example, the course in ‘Supervision and Observation for Prospective Teacher Educators’, conducted by the NIE in 1999 can be mentioned. Yet these courses are, of course not considered to fulfill participants’ needs and such courses conducted in Sri Lanka are based on what course designers perceive as being the needs of teachers. Instead of considering the actual needs of teachers, courses are based on what providers have the expertise to provide.

The above discussion reveals a part of the reason why students’ performance is unsatisfactory in the public examinations. Furthermore, all the teachers of English do not have the access to follow the above mentioned course programmes. Besides, these course programmes do not aim to develop learners, communicative ability.

There is no recommended teaching method for teaching ESL in the university. Lecturers / Instructors choose methods which they find appropriate, according to the proficiency level of students and the classroom context. Hence a uniformity in the choice of teaching method is lost.

### **Undergraduates’ Instrumental and Integrative Orientations**

With the view of enhancing or instilling motivation for learning L2, the educational policy makers and syllabus designers usually identify the L2 learners’ needs and goals. Besides, the identification of the L2 learners’ needs and goals would enable the teacher to adopt teaching methodologies and strategies to meet and satisfy the students’ needs. This perceived relevance between personal needs and learning activities could be a prerequisite for sustaining motivation to learn. According to Dornyei and Oxford and Shearin (1994 ; 1994 as cited in Qashoa, 2006,p.30), the following list of needs for learning a L2 has been produced.

- getting a better job, getting access to target language media or conducting business with the target language country (the instrumental orientation)
- traveling to other countries (the instrumental motivational subsystem)
- friendship, or in Dornyei’s term, Xenophobia (the integrative motivational subsystem)
- broadening one’s view and avoiding provincialism (the knowledge orientation)

- interests in foreign language culture, and people or satisfying curiosity about cultural secrets (the socio cultural orientation)
- seeking new intellectual stimulation and personal challenge;
- enjoying the elitism of taking a difficult language (e.g. American High School students learning Japanese);
- showing off to friends, parents and society.

In fact, the afore-stated needs are by no means universally applicable or exhaustive. It should be borne in mind that not all language learners have the same motives and needs on account of their different learning contexts. Nevertheless, the above list could be treated as general information which language teacher can take as a starting point to lead to the more specific needs in the individual context.

However instrumental motivation is strongly goal oriented and doesn't seem to involve any identification or feeling of closeness with the other language group (Gardner, 2001). L2 learners might apply instrumental motivation, operating whereby they persuade themselves to enjoy in L2 learning even though they have no liking for the language and culture. (Zimmerman, 1989) Instrumental motivation will be found more prominent in situations where there are utilitarian benefits.

With regard to the integrative orientation of the undergraduates, only six students reported about their interest in understanding and appreciating the British and American literature. The non-existence of the English speaking people in Jaffna is the sole reason for the absence of the integrative motivation among the undergraduates. Further, in the ESL classes in the university, only the linguistic features of the language are taught. Moreover some students stated that they hate watching English films and plays as most of them include events contradicting with the values and beliefs of their native culture.

The value of the integrative orientation should be duly recognized in view of the foreseen instability of the instrumental motivation as it can be such as the economic and political changes.

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Those who focus on learning English only for the purpose of getting a good job or because English is the dominant language of technology and economy ought to realize the fact that the supremacy of English won't last forever and the rise of a super power might change the situation. Greater emphasis on instrumental motivation and the negligence of the integrative motivation might tend to affect the learners' general motivation for learning L2. For example, most of the respondents in this study learn English for getting jobs, passing the examinations and or applying for foreign scholarships. This follows that after fulfilling these purposes, instrumental motivation has run its course for most of the learners. So the strength of the integrative motivation lies in the stability of its goals. Compared to the instrumental language goals related to career or passing examinations, the goals of integrative language are more stable.

### **Demotivating Factors**

Demotivation related to some subject aspects (Vocabulary, spelling and structural difficulties) has been identified. Other types of demotivating factors including the lecturer's personality and teaching methods and reduced self confidence also have been found to have their own influence. The subject demotivating factors are taken for discussion first since they are the most frequent.

### **Subject Demotivating Factors**

#### **Vocabulary**

Most of the undergraduates feel demotivated to learn English because of the large number of English words which they have to memorize. Vocabulary plays such an important role in learning a foreign language and it is one element that links the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing all together. For communicating well in English, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately. Although the undergraduates realize the value of vocabulary, most of them learn vocabulary passively due to many factors. First the testing system of ESL in the university requires undergraduates to memorize long lists of vocabulary by heart. Students are still following the traditional ways of learning and memorizing vocabulary. Practice of memorizing long lists of new words with the

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meaning in the native language without any real context lays heavy burden on the learners and spoils their motivation for learning. In the view of Nation (2000, p.6) words should not be learnt separately or by memorization without understanding. Further, “learning new words is a cumulative process with words enriched and established as they are met again.” The author is of the opinion that the learning context in the university (evaluation system, teaching methods and learning strategies) can be partly blamed for demotivation among students in learning vocabulary.

### **Structure Difficulties**

For most ESL students in the university, learning grammar is tedious and they complain about the difficulty of structures. A misconception among the undergraduates is that without the mastery of English grammatical rules, they won't be able to communicate in English. The negligence of other major skills as listening and speaking and extra concentration on structural rules of learners are the reasons for these misconceptions.

Being a lecturer and in the light of the discussion with the undergraduates, the author believes that the difficulty of English structures the students experience stems from the difference in the grammatical and syntactical structures between Tamil and English.

The tenses in English are considered one of the most difficult structural points facing the Tamil students learning English since there is a difference in the number of tenses in English and Tamil. Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000) conducted a study to investigate the Jordanian students' writing errors and they found tense errors are the most frequent ones committed by the Arab learners since Arabic like Tamil, has 3 tenses only.

According to en.wikipedia.org.wiki(N.D.:8), Tamil is a constantly head-final language. The verb occurs at the end of the clause and the typical word order, Subject Object Verb (SOV) is found. However Tamil also exhibits extensive word order variations and as a result surface permutations of the SOV order are possible with different pragmatic effects.

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Tamil is a null subject language. Not all Tamil sentences have subjects, verbs and objects. One can find valid sentences that have only a verb – such as ‘mudintuviddatu’ (completed)- or only a subject and object, without a verb such as *atu en vi:du* (That my house). Tamil does not have a copula (a linking verb equivalent to the word is), Whereas, the word order in a sentence in English is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO).

e.g. *avan coru unkiran.* (He rice eats.)

The English equivalent of the above sentence is as follows.

He eats rice.

While the sentence structure “*coru unkiran avan.*” (rice eats he.) is recognized as an accepted form in Tamil, the corresponding word order in English, “rice eats he.” is totally incorrect.

Saravanapava Iyar (2001) illustrated that in Jaffna English, speakers use the past perfect tense very frequently instead of the past tense. For example, I have no work to continue today. I had finished it yesterday.

In the above example, Simple Past tense can be used, but Jaffna English speakers use the Past Perfect.” (Saravanapava Iyar, 2001:91)

Further, Saravanapava Iyar (2001) stated that some verbs such as appear, feel, seem, look etc. which cannot be used in the Present Continuous tense are used by the Jaffna English speakers to construct sentences in the same tense.

“I am hoping to see you.

I am believing you.

It is appearing to be a planned affair.” (p.90)

## Spelling Errors

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One of the handicaps the undergraduates have in writing paragraphs and compositions is their fear of making a lot of spelling mistakes. English spelling seems to be difficult for many Tamil ESL learners for several reasons. First, students perceive English as not representing the pronunciation of words; silent letters are there and there are many ways to spell one sound. Second, some learners have the difficulty in identifying pronunciation distinctly enough to spell words. Some sounds such as /f/, /g/, /z/ and /b/ have no equivalents in Tamil. Some consonants with phonic alternation as “c” in cow and pencil or “g” in green and ginger become a challenge for the learners with regard to spelling.

Being unaware of the reasons for difficulties in mastering English spelling the learners are haunted by the fear of making mistakes in spelling. This fear affects negatively their writing skill, makes students learn in an insecure atmosphere and reduces their motivation for learning English.

## **Listening**

Many students are demotivated when they encounter difficulties in understanding the recorded materials in the listening classroom.

The importance of listening as a basic language skill is widely recognized and many researchers emphasize the influence of listening on the other language skills and on the learners’ schemata. In the view of Rost (1990), listening is the most broadly used language skill and it is the primary vehicle for learning language as it is a medium through which people gather tremendous information and understanding of the world. Furthermore, listening being a receptive skill paves the way for productive skills and communicative competence. Thus the need for finding measures to increase the students’ motivation toward listening texts and exercises and to identify the demotivating factors so as to reduce the anxiety about the difficulty of recorded texts.

In the listening classes in the university, for most students understanding the accent of the native speakers is hard since they are familiar with only the speech of their lecturer who is a nonnative speaker of English.

Seliger (1995) stated that a loss of respect for the natural patterns of the language in English teaching for many years has been observed; teachers have got in the way of accepting all sorts of artificial or adapted tests. Hence the researcher views that authentic teaching material which provides a true representation of real speech should be used in the listening classes in order to motivate learners to cope with real life situations.

### **Infrequent Use of Technology**

Students will be more interested in following the English classes if technological devices such as T.V, video, computer etc. are used in the classroom. Most students are demotivated to learn English as their Instructors / Lecturers rarely use technology in conducting the English classes. To increase motivation, several types of technology can be used. Marshal (2002) claimed that what an experienced teacher does naturally can be complemented by educational technology and expands students experience beyond the classroom. With ever expanding content and technology choices from video to multimedia to the internet, Marshal suggests that a need arises to understand the recipe for success involving the learner, the teacher, the content and the environment in which technology is used.

It is urgent for the English Instructor / Lecturer in the university to appreciate the benefits that can be derived from the use of technology in motivating the learners and enriching the teaching and learning process. The use of technology in classes leads to positive change in the educational process. For example, the teachers' perceptions of their students' capabilities can shift dramatically when technology is integrated into the classroom. Also when technology is in use, teachers frequently find themselves acting more as coaches and less as teachers. Further the use of technology would foster collaboration among students which in turn would create a positive effect on students' attainment levels.

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Also it is to be noted that using technology has other advantages such as preparing students for today's information society. Since web technology has become a part of today's social fabric, computer technologies and the internet can be considered powerful tools to be used in language classes. Besides language learners can now learn through writing e – mail and conducting online research. (WANG, 2005)

It's notable that utilizing technology in the university is correlated with other variables such as teachers' training, curriculum, cost effectiveness and teacher – students ratio. For example, unless the teachers are familiar with the technology to be used in teaching students won't be able to benefit from it. Instructors/Lecturers in English should be provided with adequate support in using technology. Lack of acquaintance with technology prevents the teacher from using it. Wenglinsky (1998) found that teachers who have received professional development with computers are more likely to use computers in effective ways than those who have not participated in such training.

### **Infrequent Use of Tamil**

The use of students' mother tongue in second language classes still remains a controversial issue and a lot of arguments and counter arguments have been taking place among linguists regarding the impact of such issue on 2<sup>nd</sup> language acquisition. Students are expected to have maximum meaningful input of the target language for communicating in the target language. For the acquisition of any language, both maximum “input” (Krashen, 1987) and “output” (Swain, 1985) are felt to be very important. Yet, the findings of some studies maintain that some extent of the use of students' mother tongue in the second language classroom is important (Atkinson, 1987, Guthrie, 1984).

The teacher's rare use of Tamil in English classes is viewed as motivating and demotivating at the same time by different students. Those who referred to the rare use of Tamil as a demotivating factor may be satisfied with temporary achievements such as passing the



examination whereas for some other students in the same classes, it is a motivating factor since they want to communicate fluently in English.

Under such circumstances, the Instructors / Lecturers are in a difficult situation because on one hand they are expected to maximize the use of English and on the other hand they need to ensure that the less proficient students in their classes are able to pick up what they say. It is understood that the choice of language can be determined by the consideration of the realistic classroom situations.

## **Conclusion**

Widdowson (1984) has rightly claimed that the aim of L2 class is to teach language for communication. However, a distinction between aims and procedure is indispensable. If the goal of ESL teaching is to get students to communicate effectively in L2, the procedures through which the goal is to be attained should exhibit a balanced combination of both the teaching of language as and for communication. Exposition to real texts is not enough to achieve this goal; but it remains as an essential component of ESL programme. Most of the university students lack exposure to English at home, in the university and outside. It is also evident that greater the level of exposure to English of the students higher their use of English in real life situations.

With regard to the attitude, the majority of the undergraduates of the university have a positive attitude to the use of English in the household, university and outside. Yet some students have developed a negative attitude to the language due to certain misconceptions of the language and lack of facilities for learning it.

Instrumental motivation is found to be common among the students.

Hence the necessity to provide students with adequate exposure to English is essentially felt. Introduction of real life situations in the ESL classroom is a good practice to achieve communicative competence among students.

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## CHAPTER – 4

### CLASS ROOM ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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In this chapter, two types of teaching techniques namely (1) Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and (2) Teaching through Language Activities, to develop students' communicative competence are under discussion.

TBLT which has been popular since its introduction in the 1980s basically reflects communicative teaching and learning. It refers to a type of language teaching which includes “tasks” as its prime units for designing and implementing L2 instruction.

Language activities are intended to provide students with adequate practice for expressing meaning effectively and appropriately as social context requires so that the students' communicative competence could be developed in a natural manner.

In chapter III, it has been observed that a major factor hindering students to achieve communicative competence is the lack of exposure to language. Hence the techniques to be discussed in this chapter are believed to overcome this problem by providing necessary exposure to students, particularly through real world experience.

#### **Task – based Pedagogy – A Brief Review**

In 1976, the British Applied linguist Wilkins (1976, p.2 as cited in Nunan, 2006) made a basic distinction between what he called ‘Synthetic approaches’ to syllabus design and ‘analytical approaches’. According to him, all syllabuses fitted one or other of these approaches.

In synthetic approaches, “Different parts of the language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up” (Wilkins, 1976, p.2 as cited in Nunan, 2006, p. 2)

Such approaches are based on the traditional way of organizing the syllabus and reflect the idea that the central role of instruction is to simplify the learning challenges for the student. One way to simplify learning is to break the content down into its constituent parts and to introduce each part separately and step by step. A related concept that was popular in the 1960s was that of mastery learning. In mastery learning, the subject matter was broken down and sequenced from easy to difficult and each content item was introduced to the learner in a serial fashion, and a new item was not supposed to be introduced until the correct item had been thoroughly mastered.

The dominant approach to language teaching in Asia and most of the rest of the world has been a synthetic one. Teachers who have learned their own language through a synthetic approach consider it as the normal and logical way of learning language.

In the book titled *Notional Syllabus*, written by him, Wilkins (as cited in Nunan, 2006) offered an alternative to synthetic approaches. These approaches are known as analytical approaches as the learners are presented with holistic chunks of language and are required to analyze them or break them down into their constituent parts.

“Prior analysis of the total language system into a set of discrete pieces of language that is a necessary precondition for the adoption of a synthetic approach is largely superfluous. Such approaches are organized in terms of the purposes of which people are learning language and the kinds of language that are necessary to meet these purposes” (Wilkins,1976,p.13 as cited in Nunan, 2006, p. 2).

All syllabus proposals that do not depend on a prior analysis of the language belong to this second category. In addition to task – based syllabuses, they all have one thing in common – they do not rely on prior analysis of the language into its discrete points. Then, Task – based language teaching grew out of this alternative approach to language pedagogy. Since then the concept of task has become an important element in syllabus design, classroom teaching and learner assessment.

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Prabhu has been the pioneer to apply TBLT in teaching programmes. He conducted his studies in Bangalore of Southern India in 1979 to put his theories into practice. He believed that students may learn more effectively when they concentrate on tasks rather than on the language they are using.

### **Tasks**

Tasks have been defined in various ways. Nunan (2004) drew a basic distinction between real world or target tasks and pedagogical tasks. Target tasks refer to uses of language in the world beyond the classroom. Pedagogical tasks are those that occur in the classroom.

According to Long (1985, p. 89) “A task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others freely or for some reward. Thus examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes , making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, writing a cheque, finding a street destination and helping someone across a road. In other words, by ‘task’ is meant, the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between” This definition is non – technical and non – linguistic. It describes the sorts of things that the person in the street would say if asked what they were doing.

Here is a definition of a pedagogical task.

“... an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language. (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction while performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative .... since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake.” (Richards, Platt and Webber, 1986, p. 289).

In this definition, the authors take a pedagogical perspective. Tasks are defined in terms of what the learners will do in class rather than in the world outside the classroom.

Those who advocate TBLT have stressed the importance of incorporating authentic data into the classroom while it has been pointed out that authenticity is lost when a piece of language is shifted from the communicative context in which it occurred and taken to the classroom. However, it is to be borne in mind that if learners are exposed only to contrived dialogues and texts, learning the language will be meaningless.

The above discussion endorses the fact that tasks should be related to learners' real experience of daily life. Hence learners need authentic data to make learning meaningful. Tasks can be made authentic via following means.

**a. Through genuine task purposes**

Willis (1998) asserted that one of the prime aspects of task authenticity is whether real communication takes place. In order to make tasks authentic, it is necessary to find out a genuine purpose for the language to be learned; unless there is a purpose, real meaningful communication will be impossible. When there is a genuine communicative purpose, students will find the chance to interact naturally. Communicative purpose in turn, will lead to increased fluency and natural acquisition.

**b. Through real world targets**

Long and Crookes (1992) argued that pedagogic tasks must be related to real – world target tasks. Examples given by them include buying a train ticket, renting an apartment, reporting a chemistry experiment, taking lecture notes and so on. Classroom – based pedagogic tasks may not be similar to the target tasks. However they can be regarded as authentic if they have a clear relationship with real – world needs.

**c. Through classroom interactions**

A classroom is a typical environment in which students and teachers work toward for a common goal. Classroom interactions make pedagogic tasks to be authentic. Teachers should

have the ability to look for the potential authenticity of the learning environment in classroom. Learning tasks, the materials to be selected and worked on and the actual needs and interests of all people who have gathered in the classroom provide adequate authentic potential for communication.

#### d. **Learners' engagement**

Whether the task is relevant to the learners is another important aspect to be considered. When designing a task, it is necessary to take learners engagement into account, so as to make tasks more authentic. While some tasks may be authentic to some learners, they may not be so to others. Therefore by engaging students in the tasks, tasks can be made authentic to a good extent.

### **Task Types**

Ellis (1999) held that there are two main types of task, i.e. (1) Unfocused tasks and (2) focused tasks. Unfocussed tasks are further categorized into (a) pedagogic tasks and (b) real world tasks.

#### **Pedagogic Unfocussed Task**

An example of a pedagogic unfocussed task is shown below.

A group of four students is formed and each of the four students has one picture and describes it to the rest of the class.

Students from the rest of the class ask the four students questions about their pictures.

One student from the class tries to tell the story.

If necessary step 2 and 3 are repeated.

### **Real – world Unfocussed Task**

An example of a real – world unfocused task is shown below.

The following instruction is given to students to try the exercise.

Look at the e-mail message below. Listen to Mr. Joy’s instructions on the tape. Make notes if you want to. Then write a suitable reply to Ranjan.

Dear Mr. Joy!

Please send flight number, date and time of arrival and I will arrange for someone to meet you at the airport.

*Ranjan*

### **Focussed Task**

An example of a focused task is as follows.

You are the Director of a private language institute and have advertised for a new English teacher. Below are summaries of the CVs of two applicants. Discuss each applicant and then decide which one to offer the job to.

Nimal, aged 30.

B.A. in Social studies.

Has spent a year working his way round the world.

Has spent six years teaching economics in government schools.

Has written a highly successful novel about teachers.

Has been married twice – now divorced, two children.

Has been running local youth group for three years.

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Betty, aged 45.

Has been married for 24 years, three children.

Has not worked most of the time.

Has done evening courses in youth guidance.

Has spent the last year teaching pupils privately.

Has been constantly active in local government.

Has been elected to local Council twice.

It is hoped that the above discussions will enlighten the teachers to easily understand the basic procedures and advantages of TBLT; the teachers may also find some practical principles to apply them to their communicative task design.

### **Components of Communicative Tasks**

Nunan (1989) stressed that communicative tasks will incorporate a goal, input, activities, settings and rules. Task goals are to develop students' communicative competence. Tasks include some form of input data that may be verbal, for example, a dialogue or reading passage or non-verbal, for example, a picture sequence. Activity refers to tasks not exercises. An activity is derived from the input and sets out what the learners are expected to do in relation to the input.

There are many sources from which input can be derived. These sources include the teacher talking to students, the reading passage, a listening text on tape etc. The necessity of providing students sufficient reading and listening materials is felt, since one of the main aims of input is to teach students how to read and listen to English. For example, students may be required to read a text to extract some specific information. The same can be applicable in listening activities also. Adequate practice in reading and listening activities will lead them to perform well.



## **Input Approaches**

In communicative classroom, the approaches of input include listening to extract specific information and reading to extract specific information. These two main approaches are discussed in the following sections.

### **a) Listening to extract specific information.**

Teaching listening involves the training of students to understand what is being said in such conversations and to enable them to disregard redundancy, hesitation and ungrammaticality. Since they practice it in their own language, we can optimistically assume that they can be trained to practice it in English also. After they listen to the text, they can be allowed to go through the transcript of conversations quickly to check the information they have extracted during listening and again the tape can be played.

### **b) Reading to extract specific information**

It is generally hard for a teacher to convince students of ESL that texts in English can be understood even though they contain vocabulary items and structure which may be new to students. Students may not be able to understand the whole text but it is possible to extract specific information.

It is important to train students in skills such as the ability to understand what is important even though the reader is unable to understand everything as they may well have to comprehend reading in just a situation in real life. The same is true for listening. Anyhow as the reading text is static, students have the tendency to read slowly with the greater focus on the meaning of each word of their interest. If they go on reading in this manner, they will encounter difficulties in quickly scanning a text for information. Therefore the teacher should stress on the comprehension task being carried out in a limited time frame.

## **Activities**

Activities are the participants' behaviour in relation to the input. Nunan (1989 / 2000) suggested three ways of characterizing activities.

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1. rehearsal for the real world;
2. skills use;
3. fluency and accuracy.

Speaking is considered the most important activity, of all the four skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking activities are regarded important in a language course as they are means used to promote the learners' ability to express themselves. Designing speaking activities of course involves strategic efforts. Learners encounter some problems when they take part in speaking activities. It's the responsibility of the teachers to work out effective speaking activities to cope with the learners' problems.

### **Activity Types**

Researchers have shown great interest in exploring activity types that stimulate interactive language use in real situations or classrooms. Pirabhu (1987) proposed one of the most general classifications, and these types are based on three principal activity types including information gap, reasoning gap and opinion gap activities. On the other hand, various findings are put forward, related to the most effective activity in facilitating L2 learning. Pica and Doughty (1985, as cited in Jeon and Hahn, 2006) illustrated that the two – way information gap games (e.g. all learners in a group discussion have unique information to contribute) stimulated more modified interactions than one – way information gap activities. (e.g. One member of the group possesses all the relevant information). Role – plays can be effectively used to add variety to the kinds of activities students are to perform by encouraging them to develop and practice new language and by creating the motivation and involvement required for real learning. Grellet (1981, as cited in Jeon and Hahn, 2006) devised some method in which learners may develop flexible communication strategies through matching activities based on inferring the meaning of unknown elements. Here each activity type manifested its effectiveness in promoting language learning, thereby encouraging learners to develop their own strategies.

## **Classroom Setting**

Jeon and Hahn (2006) spoke about classroom setting as another component of task. Classroom setting refers to a kind of environment in which tasks are performed. There can be different arrangements by which learners can be grouped physically based on individual, pair, small group and whole class mode. Many researchers favour the effectiveness of group work in comparison to individual work for general pedagogic reasons. Group work is believed to increase the cooperation and cohesiveness among learners. Group work promotes a linguistic environment which may assist L2 learning. In contrast, in the view of Li and Adamson (1992), advanced students preferred individual work to group work or whole class work, on their belief that group activities would not improve their academic grades. The research findings regarding classroom settings are found to represent some mixed results. Therefore the classroom arrangement should be flexible rather than fixed. Depending on the learning situations, different settings are arranged for task participants and the rules for the teacher should be dynamic in order to control class modes.

## **Summary**

TBLT provided learner with the opportunity for ‘natural’ learning inside the classroom. It emphasizes meaning over form, but can also cater for learning form.

It is intrinsically motivating. It is compatible with a learner – centred educational philosophy but also allows for teacher input and direction.

It caters to the development of communicative fluency while not neglecting accuracy. It can be used alongside a more traditional approach.

## CHAPTER – 5

### CONCLUSION

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#### **Issues**

The major issues regarding students' impediments in developing their communicative competence in ESL are summarized here.

The English language proficiency of the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna is very low when they enter the University. Most of them have failed in General English in the G.C.E. (A/L) examination. It is found that no training or expert guidance with regard to the use of General English course material is provided to teachers in Jaffna. Specialists or qualified resource persons to guide teachers of English to handle this course material are not available in Jaffna. In some schools in the remote areas of the Jaffna district, English classes are not held in the G.C.E. (A/L) classes since no teachers of English have been appointed in these schools.

The ELTC of the University of Jaffna does not prescribe any textbooks designed for teaching communicative competence in the ESL classes. Certain recommended materials used as supplementary readers only in the first year of the ESL course do not incorporate elements to teach communicative competence. Materials produced by the ELTC staff panel to be used in the classes are based on the traditional methods of language teaching.

Since there is no fixed teaching method for teaching ESL in the University of Jaffna, Lecturers /Instructors in English have the freedom of choosing their own method which they find appropriate according to the proficiency level of students and the classroom context. CLT approach is almost neglected.

Majority of the undergraduates lack exposure to English at home, in the University and in the social surrounding. It is also discovered that students with greater extent of exposure to English, use this language to a higher extent in real life situations.

Most undergraduates are found to hold a positive attitude toward English. Yet a very small number of undergraduates have a negative attitude due to certain misconception about the language and lack of facilities for learning it.

Almost all the undergrads have instrumental motivation to learn English. Their concern mainly involves the fulfillment of ESL requirement of obtaining a pass in English. Subsequently they do not have the urge to develop their communicative competence.

Demotivating factors related to some subject aspects such as vocabulary, structural difficulties, spelling and listening and rare use of technology are stated by the undergraduates.

Most undergraduates feel demotivated to learn English because of the large number of English words which they have to memorize. For effective communication, students should have an adequate stock of vocabulary and should know how to use them appropriately. Although the students have a clear understanding of the value of vocabulary, most of them have the tendency to learn it passively due to some factors. First the testing system of ESL in the University compels the students to memorize a long list of vocabulary by heart. Students haven't yet moved away from the traditional ways of learning vocabulary. They practice of memorizing several new words at a time with their meaning in Tamil, without any context. It lays heavy burden in the learners and their interest for learning is lost. The evaluation system, teaching materials and learning strategies are factors that demotivate learners from learning vocabulary.

Grammar is a boring portion for most of the ESL students in the University and they complain about the structural difficulties of the language. The undergrads also have a misconception that they won't be able to communicate in English without the mastery of its grammatical rules. The difficulty of English structures is mainly due to the difference in the grammatical and syntactical structures between Tamil and English. As there is a difference in the number of tenses in English and Tamil, the tenses in English are believed to be the most difficult structural point for Tamil students learning English.

The undergraduates have a great handicap in writing paragraphs and compositions because of their fear of making spelling mistakes frequently. English spelling system is difficult for many Tamil ESL learners for various reasons. First, students believe that they do not find a regular correlation between spelling and pronunciation in English as they find the presence of silent letters and of many ways to spell one sound. Second, some learners have the difficulty in identifying pronunciation distinctly enough to spell words. They are not aware of the reasons for difficulties in mastering English spelling. Their fear of making spelling mistakes grows further. This fear adversely affects their writing skill and makes them learn in an insecure environment and ultimately reduces their motivation for learning English.

Nearly half the number of undergrads has difficulties in understanding the recorded materials in the listening classroom. Most students in the listening classes find it hard to understand the accent of the native speakers since they are familiar with only the speech of their lecturer who is a nonnative speaker of English.

Some undergrads feel demotivated to learn English as their lecturers rarely use technology in the English classes.

## **Solutions**

The author wishes to make the following recommendations in order to overcome the difficulties the students face in following the ESL classes and develop their communicative competence which is the aim of language teaching and learning.

### **(i) English Language Proficiency at School Level**

Pertaining to the low level English language proficiency of new entrants to the university, ministerial instructions should be given to educational zones to arrange for seminars and training programmes to guide teachers of English in handling the General English course material in school. Teachers' participation in such programmes should be made compulsory. Further, the schools which have a dearth of teachers of English or which do not have teachers of English at all should be identified and immediate steps should be taken to effect teaching appointments in

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these schools. These measures are supposed to increase the quality of teaching, which may, in turn, lead to the development of English language proficiency among students. Hence, the students will have achieved a satisfactory level of L<sub>2</sub> proficiency before they enter the university.

### **(ii) Text Book and Teaching Methodology**

Appropriate text books and teaching materials should be introduced to meet the English language needs of the country and to fulfill the expectation of the nation – expectation of different parties – the government, the students, the guardians and the employers. The use of traditional text books that focus only on form should be replaced by specially designed text books that focus on meaning. Again, these materials should be used as they are intended to be used. That is, teachers and students should possess a clear idea of how to use them. Both teachers and students should be trained for this purpose.

Teachers should be aware that students need English to use it in real communication. To ensure that students are learning English with the aim that they will use it, the teaching methodology and the testing format must be modified. CLT approach is generally approved to achieve this aim.

### **(iii) Exposure**

To provide adequate exposure of language to students, the teacher should introduce task – oriented activities which can make learners use the target language to persuade and negotiate their way to desired results. This process involves the productive and receptive skills simultaneously. During these activities, students can have the opportunity to use language in a non-stressful way, after learning and practicing new vocabulary. For example, while playing games, the learners' attention is on the message, not on the language. Most participants will do all they can to win, rather than pay attention to the correctness of linguistic forms. Also it will ease the fear of negative evaluation, the concern of being negatively judged in public which is one of the main factors inhibiting language learners from using target language in front of others. During the course of these activities, anxiety is eliminated, speech fluency is generated and thus the communicative competence is achieved.

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Activities selected should be motivating also. Games which are motivating, for example, introduce an element of competition which may provide valuable impetus to a purposeful use of language. In other words, these activities create a meaningful context for language use. The competitive ambiance also makes learners concentrate and think intensively during the learning process which enable the learner to unconsciously acquire a good amount of inputs.

In sum, the activities to be introduced in the class should have the following characteristics:

They should be learner centered.

They should promote communicative competence.

They should create a meaningful context for language use.

They should increase language motivation.

They should reduce learning anxiety.

They should integrate various linguistic skills.

They should encourage creative and spontaneous use of language.

They should construct a cooperative learning environment.

They should foster participatory attitudes of the students.

#### **(iv) Vocabulary**

Lack of vocabulary is a great handicap of students in achieving the communicative competence.

Communication becomes impossible without mastery of words. It is mainly the words that convey our feelings and thoughts to others. A second or foreign language learner of English is required not only focus upon the sentence structures but also upon the acquisition of words.

The teacher, in order to establish the words in the learner should repeat the newly introduced words in different contexts.

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Lexical study may include units that compose the words such as prefixes, suffixes, stems, and inflectional and derivational patterns.

In case of unfamiliar words, observing how they are used and making intelligent guesses would help students to learn the meaning of them. Over time guesses will get refined and meanings turn out to be specific.

Reading is an effective means to learn new words since the reader will be able to guess the meaning of the word from the context.

Students are also advised to develop the habit of using dictionaries and the Thesaurus.

Understanding and application of word formation processes will be a fine way of building vocabulary.

#### **(v) Structure / Grammar**

CLT is perceived as a departure from grammar in favour of focusing on the meaning only. It enables students to perform spontaneously, but does not guarantee the linguistic accuracy of the utterances. On the other hand, form – based approaches focus on the linguistic and grammatical structures which make the speech grammatically accurate. But this accuracy can be observed in prepared speech only and students are unable to operate spontaneously.

In learning L<sub>2</sub> grammar, students are forced to be in a dilemma. On the one hand, they need to know the rules, since they are mostly tested on grammar knowledge in examinations. On the other hand, they have to develop the communicative competence as it is the main aim of language learning. Here the teacher is expected to look for ways to combine form and meaning in teaching ESL.

The EEE method, consisting of three stages (exploration, explanation and expression) as recommended by Sysoyev (N.D) can be an appropriate method for combining form and meaning.

In the first, exploration stage, learners look at certain sentences and discover a grammatical pattern under a lecturer's supervision. Instead of giving an explicit rule, students are allowed to discuss and discover grammatical patterns. It will help students understand the rules. A teacher is given the role of the monitor. In the second, explanation stage, the teacher will explain explicit rules and it will make the students' speech more grammatically accurate. In the third, expression stage, students use new structures in interaction, producing meaningful utterances. This stage prepares L<sub>2</sub> learners for spontaneous L<sub>2</sub> use by helping them focus equally on form and on meaning in using their language in communication.

#### **(vi) Spelling**

English spelling system poses big impediments to students. Cronnell (1979, as cited in Thirumalai, 2002, p. 77) pointed out that since the second or foreign language learners of English do not yet speak Standard English, they are likely to commit more errors in spelling, especially with regard to those sounds which they are unable to discriminate between. Therefore, if students are to learn the English spelling better, they must use the Standard English.

A programmed text may provide more individualized learning without creating much burden on the teacher. Also students should be encouraged to identify the spelling of words in which there are sounds with two or more possible spellings. Proof reading sentences with spelling errors can be a good exercise.

There are rules which are somewhat more regular than others. Teachers can organize the words into groups and then touch words group by group. For example, the letter C is pronounced as k before a, o, u or a consonant: cat, cold, cute, cream. Several such rules, not only for consonant, but for vowels also are there. Therefore, the teacher can explain these rules for students to understand the underlying spelling system.

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The researcher suggests that students may memorize and copy the spelling. Dictation by the teacher can be an effective exercise to assess the spelling skill. Depending on the capacity of students, the number of words to be memorized must be limited. Spelling bee contests with some rewards is an appropriate reinforcement technique.

#### **(viii) Listening**

As pointed out in the previous section of this chapter, half the student population in the university loses interest in following the listening classes. Hence proper techniques should be adopted to arouse their interest by effectively organizing the teaching of listening skill. Listening, like other language skills, can be acquired through wide exposure to the target language. Sufficient facilities should be made to enable the students to listen to native speakers' speech from the beginning, so that they can familiarize themselves with the native speakers' accent and understand their speech.

In the part of students, outside the classroom, they have several needs to satisfy only by listening to the speech in the surrounding in which they function and express what they need actually. If they are studying or working in an English speaking country, they have to understand the native speakers of English they contact in their day to day life. In case, they have no access to native speakers of English, they should listen and comprehend the native tongue used in the electronic media. It is important to have focus on exposure to the native speakers' speech in contexts that are relevant to the L2 learners' goals in learning English.

In selecting appropriate materials for students, Morley (1991, as cited in Thirumalai, 2002) suggested three important principles: relevance, transferability / applicability, and task – orientation. The materials should be relevant to the interests and level of the students. The content, structures and words in the listening materials should be transferable and utilized in other classes or outside the classroom. Task – oriented materials focus on performance based on what is presented as listening material.

### **(viii) Use of Technology**

By using more technology in language learning and teaching, the interaction pattern can be changed. Teachers can encourage greater amount of interactions by using technology both inside and outside of the classroom. For example, through internet learners find opportunities to communicate and learn collaboratively with learners worldwide. ESL learners do not need to passively listen to audio tapes alone after class, through the use of the internet and other tools, they can more keenly participate in more interactions by posting and replying messages on discussion boards, writing and replying emails to their key pals or joining online chatrooms anytime when they feel comfortable or have free time. This new way of learning may engage learners in authentic social interactions and greatly expose learners to the TL and practice what they have learned in the classroom. Further, learners have more opportunities to take part in the target social and cultural context and learn the pragmatic knowledge.

Through audio and video communications, learners are able to obtain both verbal (e.g. intonation) and non – verbal (e.g. facial expression) cues which are necessary to develop social competence.

Use of technology can also promote motivation for learners to keep learning. This motivation enables learners to become more responsible and willing to engage in their own learning. Teachers can involve learners in doing a collaborative project with another learner; for example, the project can be writing a story together in which learners are more likely to actively participate in the discussion and engage in the learning.

For ESL learners who desperately need more authentic exposure and the opportunities to exploit the knowledge obtained in the classroom, the use of computer mediated communication tools both inside and outside of the classrooms will certainly develop learners' communicative competence.

## Summary

The resources like text books and audio- visual aids such as tape recorders should be produced with the aim of promoting students' communicative ability. Adequate opportunities should be made for listening practice, although learning outcomes are addressed in terms of four skills. Lessons should be conducted in a manner to motivate students to involve themselves in real life contexts, think and act independently and exchange ideas to fulfill a genuine purpose. When producing text books/ teaching materials, focus should be on providing maximum exposure to students so that they will be able to function in English confidently when they are outside the class room.

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## Psychological Well-being within Patriarchal Borders: A Reading of Shashi Despande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

Dr. Jyoti Singh

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### Abstract

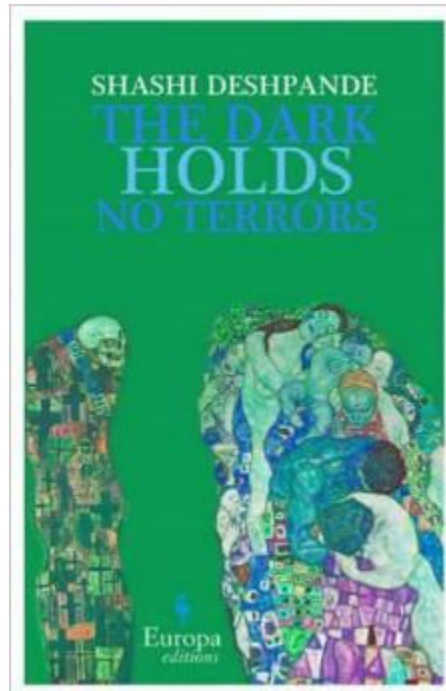
The present paper intends reading Shashi Despande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* with a view to analyse how women are conditioned to acquire femininity in a patriarchal set up and how at times it hinders in attainment of an authentic selfhood. It also proposes to discuss the concept of community as envisaged by the feminist psychologists and to explore if and how the characters in the novels under study react to the community which is associated with the patriarchal discourse and in which women have to perform the role scripted for them.

### Sharing Experiences

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Women writers have used fiction to explore and share their experiences. They do not write in a vacuum but hold a mirror to the reality. The myriad conflicts, which they face in everyday lives, are woven into the fictional world of their creation. To probe the psychological wellness of women who form half the population of the world I shall choose two novels by Indian women writers namely *The Dark Holds No Terrors* by Shashi Deshpande and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy to probe their psychic well-being in a patriarchal set up. The experience of women by virtue of their being women is undeniably universal.

The tenets of the stone centre psychologists based at the Stone Centre Wellesley College, USA would form the tools to probe how women confront the dichotomy/ dilemma of what the community wants them to be and what they want to be. Endeavour would be to analyse whether this tension causes conflicts and crises in their lives or hinders or damages their feeling of well-being.

### **Woman-Centred Psychology -- A General Survey**

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For more than a quarter century, the Stone Centre at Wellesley College, USA has been a driving force promoting a positive change for women. Most of the members of the Stone Centre like Judith Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, Janet L. Surrey, Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan share common notions and concepts which are central to their works -- women's relational sense of self, the relational path of women's development, and the importance of empathy or responsiveness in relationships.

The Stone Centre psychologists analyse the centrality of connection in the development of the women's sense of self and its effect on women's ways of approaching relational conflicts and crises. Their works articulate the experiences of women, enlarging and enhancing the understanding of women's psychology.

### **Imparting Feminine Values in Patriarchal Order**

In a Patriarchal set up stress is laid on girls imbibing the so-called feminine virtues, whereas for boys to perform the activities women do is a risk being thought of as un-masculine. Thus, the part assigned to women has been devalued and treated unimportant. This devaluation generates within women a sense of inferiority and dejection. If a society devalues women's work or status, how can it make them feel its valuable members? This is what these psychologists are questioning to reach a better understanding of women.

### **“The True Womanhood” Constraints in Patriarchal Order**

The 'true womanhood' on which the identity of women stands, defines women as nurturers and caretakers who help in the development of others. (Miller 1976:17) As a result without an equal opportunity and right to develop them, they find this situation oppressive, creating a feeling of discontent. This gives rise to conflict. Some mask it under the facade of tolerance and some openly express it. If they wage war, refusing to adopt the existing value system of male dominance, they are labelled as misfits, 'femme fatales,' sadists who are on the way to diminish the masculinity of the men around.

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Risk of abandonment and condemnation do not let women seek their goals. It initiates a strong negative reaction from the other side, because “for women to act and react out of their own being is to fly in the face of their appointed definition and their prescribed way of living”. (Miller 1976:113-14) When women start realizing their own interests and self-growth, men feel intuitively threatened by the danger of the loss of “essentials that women have been carrying for the total society”. (Ibid: 120) Their discontent or conflict with their lives is seen as ‘unfeminine’ for they are to be the “quintessential accommodators, mediators, the adaptors and soothers”. (Ibid: 125)

### **Traditional Bias of Ideal Woman**

The compatibility and non-compatibility of women to the traditional bias of ideal womanhood in both cases is hurtful. If they keep silent about the injustice, they smoulder silently and if they rebel they are threatened by separation or condemnation. It has been considered a duty for women not to attempt a thing that hurts others, and be responsible for the growth and well being of her people. Though women attempt good they feel bad internally, for their intrinsic goodness is not only overlooked, but is also not given what is its proper due. These strengths are not rewarded but become tools of exploitation.

### **Role of Affiliations**

Women’s desire for affiliations is a “fundamental strength,” which helps in advancing the humanity and making the world a better place to live (Miller 1976:89). Maintaining affiliations against all odds becomes the source of many problems for, “while women have reached for and already found a psychic basis for a more advanced social existence, they are not able to act fully and directly on this valuable basis in a way that would allow it to flourish. Accordingly they have not been able to cherish or even recognize this strength. On the contrary when women act on the basis of this underlying psychological motive, they are usually led into subservience. That is, the only forms of affiliation that have been available to women are subservient affiliations” (Ibid). A woman who has long been apprenticed in the gender role, internalises the feminine virtues;

therefore it would not be easy for one to relinquish the idea of disruption of affiliation, which may make her fall victim to a number of psychological problems which may manifest in different ways.

### **Validating Membership in a Community**

To validate one's membership to a particular community, an individual has to accept and adhere to certain principles it lays down. Generally the myth is maintained that women do not need power, do not and should not have power, whereas women have long been using their power to nurture, care and love to foster the growth of the others, effectively. They use their powers to empower the others, increasing the others' resources, capabilities, effectiveness and the ability to act.

### **Community above the Individual**

The ethics of the Indian society places the community above the individual and its membership is more of a duty to everyone. Traditions colour and contour the Indian womanhood and its power and hold on the collective Indian psyche demands conformity to the 'feminine mystique' syndrome. In the Indian social structure the legacy of cultural codes and tradition depict woman as a symbol of reverence, a 'Devi' and is desired to conform to all that the mythical 'Devis' like *Sita*, *Gandhari*, *Savitri*, *Parvati* symbolise. This does not mean that in such a country where women are deified and revered feministic demands are needless. Reality comes limping when women suffer due to their blind conformity and complacency to these stultifying archetypal principles and their basic virtues are denigrated.

### **External Validation Based on Traditional Feminine Quality**

For external validation of one's self, women adhere to the self-image based on the traditional feminine quality of 'goodness' rooted in self-abnegation and self-sacrifice is strictly demanded by the patriarchal community. This social role of deferring and attending to the

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emotional and physical needs of the others negating the needs of one's own self hinders an 'authentic selfhood.' Reconciliation with the traditional feminine becomes conflicting and problematic though most of the women follow the set social pattern of taking on responsibility to the exclusion of self and adopt the feminine convention of self-sacrifice and martyrdom.

To position themselves as worthy members of the community most women look towards external validation of their selves. In a patriarchal set-up this hinders development of autonomy in them. The other set of women, in pursuit of an autonomous self and especially, when they measure themselves against culturally valued masculine norms, turns to inner validation.

Unfortunately, in both cases discontentment is their lot. In the second case it is because community does not lend social support to non-traditional, assertive or competent women. To live in relationship is a basic human urge, hence community's ostracizing and ridicule of women in self-pursuit, renders them unhappy. Conflict becomes a taboo for women. Women's pursuit for development and initiation to bring about change to meet their requirements causes the people to think of it as "abandonment of responsibility in relationships" (Gilligan 1982:130).

### **Impact of Self-Image**

In this section my endeavour would be to focus on how the various female characters respond and relate to their self-development in a community, which is basically patriarchal and study the impact of self-image based upon the morality of care.

### ***The Dark Holds No Terrors***

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Saru exhibits rare boldness to pursue her career as a doctor, in order to validate her claims. Her mother who is successfully conditioned in the patriarchal notions becomes its agent, displaying not only partial behaviour towards her, favouring her son, but also opposes her wish to continue her studies. Saru's assertion to pursue her career comes as a shock to her mother, because she views it as socially undesirable in girls.

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Eva Figs in *Patriarchal Attitudes* correctly points out that “when a woman is required to choose between marriage and a career it does of course amount to repression on a large scale”. (1970:13) Saru goes a long way to become a successful doctor but the price paid is heavy on the emotional side. She is punished by disruption of an effective relationship with her mother. Mother’s rancour is further aggravated by Saru choosing to marry a man outside of her community and the reprisal is severe this time. Kamala declares that she never had any daughter and Saru is as good as dead to her. Though Saru is the sole decision-maker of her own life, she still remains unhappy. It is because she craves for external validation. She is dependent on her mother’s assessment of her marriage and constantly endeavours to prove her wrong. So she is not undergoing any therapeutic or cleansing experience. What Saru did —choosing her career and life partner — is not wrong, seen through the rightful claims of the self. But the community does not socially support such independent behaviour in girls and her mother, backed by such notions, punishes her in her own way. Her guilt accompanies her and is redeemed with her professing to take hold of her life towards the end of the novel.

Saru’s conjugal life is fraught with the male superiority complex. Placed on a higher plane than Manu professionally, Saru’s life becomes a nightmare and she thinks:

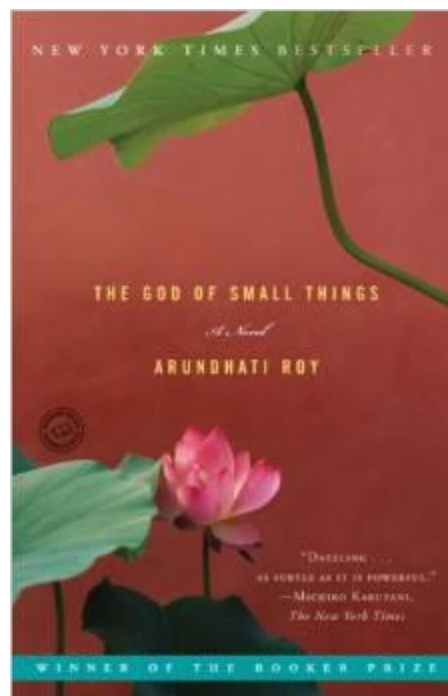
... the esteem with which I was surrounded made me inches taller. But perhaps the same thing that made me inches taller, made him inches shorter ...  $a + b$  they told us in mathematics is equal to  $b + a$ . But here  $a + b$  was not, definitely not equal to  $b + a$ . (42) A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband. If he’s an M.A, you should be a B.A. If he’s 5’4” tall, you shouldn’t be more than 5’3” tall. If he’s earning five hundred rupees, you should never earn more than four hundred and ninety nine rupees (137).

To make her marriage work and restore happiness she even suggests wanting to “stop working. I want to give it all up ... my practice, the hospital, everything” (79) and “stay at home and look after the children. Cook and clean, “ like a mother “ in an ad, in a movie, dressed in a

crispy starched, ironed sari. Wife and mother, loving and beloved, - a picture of grace, harmony and happiness". (80)

Her success on the professional front jeopardises her marital life and becomes a cause of her victimization. "Both men and women are products of their culture and victims of the institution of marriage. It is as difficult for women to outgrow the images and roles allotted to them by their society as it is for men." (Palker 1991:131)

### *The God of Small Things*



Similarly in *The God of Small Things* Pappachi is jealous of his wife who is a successful businesswoman. Mammachi, a traditional wife silently suffers physical and emotional violence, both inflicted by her jealous husband. Saru mutely suffers the rapist husband, even though marital rape is punishable by law. Sacrifice and tolerance are the two virtues expected in an ideal woman. These very virtues become instrumental in her suffering.

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Saru's ruptured marital life, an unforgiving mother who died carrying bitter feelings for Saru in her heart, result in a pessimistic attitude and withdrawal of self. It is only towards the end of the novel, when in retrospection she reflects on her past and makes up her mind to bravely face it, recasting her life. Though an open-ended novel it ends on an optimistic note, showing Saru rushing to her neighbour's ailing child, which is a sign of her merging with the community and seeking self-fulfilment. Susan Willis rightly asserts that "selfhood is not defined negatively as separateness from others, nor it is defined narrowly by the individual dyad — the child and its mother — but on the larger scale as the ability to recognise one's continuity with the larger community" (1987:159) This act of holding primacy in connections exposes Saru's individual efforts to participate in the collective life.

Ammu of *The God of Small Things* is more sinned against than sinning. Her childhood marks a long bout of suffering and torture at the hands of her father. Over a period of time "she developed a lofty sense of injustice and the mulish, reckless streak that develops in Someone Small who has been bullied all their lives by Someone Big" (181-82). Like a rebel she tries to shatter the patriarchal power structure. For a woman the road to assert or construct her person, or 'identity' or attain autonomy in a gender based power structure, is not impediment free. In a community, especially Indian, rules of morality are strict for a woman as compared to a man. It imposes on her the responsibility of care and if she deviates, nemesis befalls her. Basically, Ammu is a seeker. She longs for a loving relationship and marries for love, but her dream is shattered. She continues living with her idle, drunkard husband until his unjust selfish request to satiate the sexual urge of his white boss, makes her walk out of her marriage. This lends Ammu the charm of a heroine, but the orthodox community fails to applaud. Self-respecting Ammu with all her limitations, takes a strong stand against injustice. On returning to her mother she is an unwelcome guest for "Legally, this was the case because Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property" and she thanked sarcastically the "wonderful male chauvinist society". (57) Even men are shown to suffer in a cast-ridden, traditional community. Velutha meets a tragic end and his wife rejects Chako, which speaks of the residue of colonial consciousness.

Chacko's male chauvinism is obvious when he sidelines his mother, who is actually the motivating hand behind the pickle factory, and calls her pickle factory "my factory" whereas Ammu who works equally, does not have any share in it. (57) The pressures of community make, "Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks and Limits" and watches wide-eyed to check transgression (3). Due to their mixed parentage Estha and Rahel are deprived of both patrimony and claim on their maternal ancestors' property. Divorced mother's dilemma, to give them a surname surfaces, when Ammu helplessly feels that "choosing between her husband's name and her father's name didn't give a woman much of a choice". (37) Her affair with Velutha is kept secret to maintain harmony. She knows community would oppose it and survival would be difficult. It is done to maintain a balance between rights of self and care for responsibilities. This shows her partial surrender to the patriarchal pressures. The institutionalised tyranny punishes both the lovers. She is unable to be a whole person, but pays a heavy price in her attempt to be one. Their affair is taken as immoral, even the police officer at the Kottayam Police Station brands her a 'Veshya'. (8) On the other hand no body uses a substitute for Chako who is ever lusting after the female workers. Chacko's relation with the female factory workers is overlooked as 'men's needs' by his mother, who disregards Ammu's desires and thinks of her as "a bitch in heat". (258) She is so cruelly treated by the community that she has a recurrent dream "in which policemen approached her with snicking scissors, wanting to hack off her hair". (161) Mammachi and Kochamma both become the propagators of the ideology of the dominant class. They lock Ammu "like the family lunatic" for breaking social laws of long standing authority. (252) The society takes merciless retribution and her children also suffer. The community that rejected their mother did not embrace them. After Sophie's death Ammu is thrown out of her house.

### **Non-conformity Results in Tragedy**

Ammu's non-conformity to the extremely traditional community's social code results in tragedy for the pair of lovers. In the eyes of the rigidly conservative society Ammu had dared to subvert or challenge its values by falling in love with an untouchable. Velutha's death in police custody fills her with feelings of guilt and depression, "fear made her garrulous" and she had

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“feverish glitter in her eyes” (160-61). She lost her job due to her illness. Later she died at the age of 31. The church refused to bury Ammu on “several counts”. (162) The reprisals taken are a warning to “a community against an outbreak” (309) and “a history lesson for future offenders” (336). The community had punished those who transgressed the “love laws. That lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much”. (328) Ammu’s story shows the terrible consequences of the refusal to abide by age-old traditions of the established laws of the gender-based society. It validly reflects a woman’s experience and psychological development in patriarchal conditions.

## **Two Kinds of Women**

In the gallery of women characters portrayed, we encounter two kinds of women, one who submit to the dominant discourse for validation and the second who favour inner validation in search of a free self. The first set adopt the community’s charted path while some filled with a sense of inadequacy, especially, when they measure themselves against culturally valued masculine norms turn to inner validation. Unfortunately, in both cases unhappiness is the lot. In the second it is because the community does not lend social support and it is a basic human urge to be in relation. Women like Mammachi, succumb to external validation of their selves and fall victim to the patriarchal pressures to survive. Baby Kochamma shrugs off all ties except one that was with her beloved Father Mulligan who she remembers ardently even after his death. This inescapable tragic situation makes her numb to the suffering of others. She rejects everything to achieve individual freedom, but unhappiness is her lot for she fails to fuse with the community. Saru reach a wholeness of self when they finally recognise the strength of family bonds. Though Saru shows signs of self-pity and vulnerability, self-evaluation helps her overcome the alienating tendencies which lend her an aura of liberated woman in the true sense of the term. Such women feel a heightened sense of authenticity, validation through self-realisation which results when powerlessness is replaced by the experience of relation and power.

## **Important to Study the Attitude of Community towards Women**

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In order to study women in community and understand women as community, it is necessary to study the attitude of the community towards women. This is particularly exigent in the Indian context as the hold of the traditional stereotypical image of woman still has a strong hold on the Indian psyche and present-day Indo-centric approach to literature takes due cognisance of Indian social matrix, to deal with the representation of values in Indian literature. To grow up as a girl is different compared to growing up as a boy and it reflects the attitude of the society towards the female child.

Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* becomes “more important than Dhruva” only during the ceremony of ‘Haldi-Kumkum. (56) She feels jealous of Dhruva; Her father’s inattentiveness towards Saru makes her see Dhruva as her rival. She once tries “to take his attention away from Dhruva sitting on his lap” but fails. (32) Similarly, in GST, being a son, Chako “was permitted excesses and eccentricities nobody else was”. (38) However, sometimes this marked affection for male children create in a girl child low self-esteem, depression and feeling of worthlessness, besides the feelings of being wronged and hurt. The discrimination and feeling less loved and cared for, which is detrimental to a woman’s development of self worth and generates conflict. The female experience of growing up in a patriarchal community which encourages them to uphold the spirit of kinship, arrange their activities and lives centring around others, without equal opportunity to develop their selves unlike the males, has a tremendous impact on their psyche and growth.

In the vicious cycle of devaluation of a girl child, one main reason for being unwelcome in a family is the dowry system, which literally impoverishes the parents. Having to “spend for her wedding” - Saru is referred to as a “responsibility” which they “can’t even evade” (144). This causes resentment and feelings of unworthiness in Saru. Ammu’s marriage in *The God of Small Things* was delayed since “her father did not have enough money to raise a suitable dowry, no proposals come Ammu’s way” (38).

## **Gender Discrimination**

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Gender discrimination in imparting education to a girl is conspicuous when Ammu has to discontinue her studies while Chacko, her brother is sent to Oxford for higher education. Her college education was considered “an unnecessary expense” so sitting at home she “helped her mother with the house work”. (38) Saru’s further admission in the medical college is also seen as unnecessary by her mother who is keen on getting her married.

## **Cultural Stereotypes**

Due to the cultural conditioning, both men and women bear the cultural stereotypes in minds. This is the reason why men find it hard to accept the reversed roles women embrace and women too feel guilty if their new role does not merge well with her primary role as a mother or wife. They start believing in the absolute tenet that a woman’s place is home. “The demand that women act as repositories of the whole culture’s values compels them to endure a passivity that verges on paralysing annihilation”. (Chawla 1999:351)

Saru concentrating on her self-development climbs the ladder of success step by step, despite all hindrance, but cannot escape the ridicule hurled at her by the male community. Some men look down upon the working women and try in every way to find fault with their performance, highlighting their inability to prove professionally better. Boozie, Saru’s boss in a biased cynical tone declares, “I don’t want incompetent, clumsy, uninterested females cluttering up this place. Go home and play with your rolling pins and knitting needles”. (89) His reaction comes when Saru rushes with the lumber puncture for “Manu waiting for me at home”, (90) who when once she reached home late due to an emergency sat “with a brooding expression on his face making her heart give painful quivering little jumps”(78).

Like Saru women have to juggle the dual responsibilities of career and home which is one cause for their stress and breakdown. And like her many women often become guilt ridden for having to leave behind their children with maids or grandparents. Women “experience considerable conflict between their sense of self at work and their sense of self in their personal lives”. (Stiver 1991:224) For men “work has always been an important source of self-esteem” but

it is different with women. (ibid) Their identity is basically linked with their place at home as homemakers. They have to be wives and mothers first and career comes later. This sometimes earns them the title of ‘unprofessional’ as in the case of Saru. Due to this, women rarely seek opportunities for advancement and often feel them burdensome if they get any, for the conflict to maintain balance between the home and career pops up and they struggle to minimize it at times by ignoring their competitive wishes.

### **Surrender Complacently**

Often bogged down by their effort to maintain affiliations, to avoid ostracizing, some like Mammachi surrender complacently though the psychological pain and suffering batters them. Now and then they voice their protests, but do not openly rebel like Ammu, who walk out of their oppressive marriages. These women protest against the traditionally oppressive stereotype image and dissolve their victimizing marriages. Though they boldly reject the institution of marriage, society especially Indian, does not desire nor acknowledges a woman’s protests or rejection of the given identity and persecutes them for non-conformity.

Women often continue in an unhappy marital relationship to avoid the stigma that descends upon a divorcee or a separated woman. To escape marital violence Saru thinks of divorce, which appears “frightening” to her, so she heads for her father’s home (70). In *The God of Small Things* the word divorce is pronounced as ‘dievorce’ as if it is a form of death.

### **Community and Family**

Community is an extension of a family and what goes on the macro-level is perceptible at the micro level. Within the family the girls are conditioned to imbibe the virtues of care, nurturance, tolerance, compliance, adjustment and self-sacrifice. These are the virtues expected by the society to be inculcated especially by the females. These very qualities become a source of their exploitation. Rebellion rises within, in the form of conflict and often gives rise to the feelings of worthlessness, low self-esteem, non-involvement, depression and passivity. Saru, unable to voice her suffering silently smoulders. She becomes a “terrified animal” and

“psychotic” preferring to “rather die” than suffer the sexual sadism inflicted by Manu but due to her children she does not commit suicide.

Mammachi too suffers without voicing her anger unlike Ammu who expresses it and such women are likely to be branded as “unfeminine” or ‘immoral’ for challenging the societal codes. By oppressing the women, society itself is victimized for the virtues on which it stood for so long crumble, when women in their rage shun them.

The community should respond to the women with compassion and recognize their contribution. Whenever women raise questions concerning their lives and reflecting issues, which matter a lot to them, they are ignored as trivial matters. If they complain they are criticized for complaining, as it is not an ingredient of ‘ideal womanhood’. The strengths which women carry to advance the society – nurture, care etc – are not given due recognition and are devalued. This gives rise to numerous problems for “if society deems women’s areas less valuable, it cannot also tell a woman that she can, or should feel herself to be a fully valued person” and such feelings of inferiority lead to feelings of vulnerability. (Miller 1976:75)

The Utopian dream of a society which is not segregated by the sexist bias, where women have equal rights to advance and develop their selves, where the virtues of care, nurture, tolerance are not devalued so that women may not relinquish them in favour of ‘masculine’ values, where these values are not to be only acquired by women but become a ‘human norm’ to raise the world to greater heights of peace, security and ecstasy; “where the real self is the existential consciousness of oneself as an intentional, acting subject, rather than as object merging with the established ‘shoulds’,” can be achieved along with the concurrence and cooperation of men (Bande 2000:39). What woman needs for self-validation, is self-introspection and an ability to look at her life from a distance.

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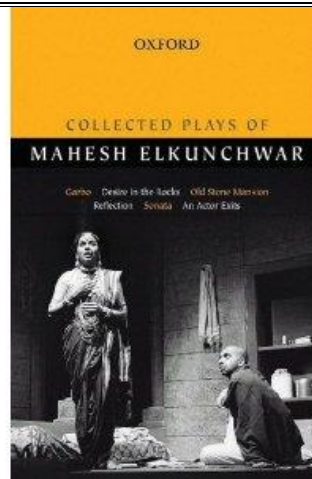
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## *Garbo - Four Outsiders* by Mahesh Elkunchwar

Dr. A. S. Kanna

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## **Garbo is about Young People**

‘Writing Garbo was a mistake, I think. Staging its performances would've been a second mistake, which I wanted to avoid,’ said Mahesh Elkunchwar in an interview, explaining why he chose not to give permission to produce the play which he scripted in the 70s. To his mind, it was a “risky proposition” (since it involved so-called indecency) which would fall flat in the hands of a lesser director or lesser actors. To his consternation it can be said that staging Garbo must have been the best, since many films are being produced with such indecency.

Garbo is about the class of young people living aimlessly with the shattered dreams, the diffusion of mediocrity, and the burden of inhibitions. It is a play about the generation which breaks out into defiance of living out their own lives with non-conformism for a credo; throwing up in the process of small minority culture, containing within itself its own seeds of destruction. Garbo is a woman in her late twenties who confronts her destiny but finally lands into trouble of sorts. As an inspiring actress she ends up doing B- grade films, as she couldn't get good opportunities.

## **Significance of the Name *Garbo***

Elkunchwar, probably would have named the character of the woman after the great Hollywood actress Greta Garbo. She is regarded as one of the greatest and most inscrutable movie stars in the Hollywood. There was some speculation that Greta Garbo was bisexual, that she had an intimate relationship with men as well as women. Soon after her career took off, she became known as recluse throughout her life. She lived the last years of her life in absolute seclusion.

## **Intuc**

Intuc is a cynical intellectual and a college professor. Pansy is a young man who shows gay tendencies in the play, and Shreemanth, a rich man, whose apartment is Intuc's and Pansy's residence. The three men try to fill void between and inside them with seemingly meaningful

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conversation, music and sexually charged- discussion about Garbo, the struggling actress and the woman in their lives.

### ***Evam Indrajith and Garbo***

When Mahesh Elkunchwar wrote *Garbo* in the early nineteen seventies, Badal Sircar's *Evam Indrajith* was already making rounds in the country's theatrical circles, with productions in English and several other languages. *Evam Indrajith* and *Garbo* were both about the class that Mahesh Elkunchwar describes in retrospect as 'we young people'. Cities Kolkatta and Mumbai carried different histories, and hence different cultures, but the young people in both places felt the same frustrations of shattered political dreams, the diffusion of mediocrity and the burden of inhibitions, as the post-independence euphoria dissipated into thin air. If Sircar, from an early generation, could only lament the collapse of youth aspirations, with a precarious reaching out to an Indrajith, who is different from Amal , Kamal and Bhimal, lost in the mire of mediocrity, Mahesh Elkunchwar's young people, a generation later, would rather break out into the defiance of living out their own lives with non- conformism for a credo; throwing up in the process, a small minority culture, containing within itself its own seeds of self-destruction.

In an interview at Nagpur, the playwright says,

Suddenly the non-conformists among us had decided to shake off all this artificial baggage imposed on us by tradition. At the same time we had realized that we didn't know what to do with the freedom, and we almost abused it. Since we were not equipped to use this freedom creatively or constructively, we began to destroy our selves in the process. (xii) (Mahesh Elkunchwar, "Garbo")

### **Cynical Posture and Trivial Conversations**

The play opens deceptively with a sense of cynical camaraderie on a Sunday morning. The set is bare and grey, except for a few bean bags, a carom board and low tables. Cigarette smoke and alcohol are, only making the progression of a long day.

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In the beginning of Act I we find a trivial conversation between Intuc and Pansy. The futile chat, when measured, reveals the superficial attitude of the society. Pansy is fond of listening to the western music. But it seems Intuc feels that he doesn't enjoy the music here. It should be a strange experience to Intuc when it brings the tears while listening to the real music. And he says about the music that, "it's a different thing altogether. You should see the crowds that come there. God knows where the bastards buy all that enthusiasm." (05)

But Pansy feels that it has nothing to do with the music itself. He assures that he enjoys it within him and inside of him. And he never bothers about the people around him. Intuc doesn't agree with Pansy, because he feels that those days are gone, when one could enjoy music as a private pleasure. Now a days, these musical concerts are an immense fraud perpetrated by the community upon the community. He shames everybody from the singers down to the listeners, who are under religious obligation to pretend to be intensely interested in art.

### **Characters Floating in Incomprehensible Universe and Self-deception**

The characters in this kind of absurd drama are lost and floating in an incomprehensible universe and they abandon rational devices and discursive thought because these approaches are inadequate. The more complex characters are in crisis because the world around them is incomprehensible.

We find self-deception in the character of Intuc, which can be understood as the guise of existence as a character, individual or person. He destroys himself through the social category of his formal identity. This essentially means that, being a poet one must believe that his social role is equal to his human existence.

Living a life defined by his occupation, social, racial and economic class, in the very faith of self-deception, he tries to identify himself in a different milieu finding,

The whole world rushes to these concerts, and this twerp says he'll go mad... our illustrious ministers..... sit in the front row. The singer treats them... humble bow from the stage. Then there are some cultured ornaments strewn around, chaps who've been accepted as art-lovers by the world. (06)

The conversation between Intuc and Pansy is quite interesting, though it is trivial. Because Intuc is a poet whereas Pansy is just an art school dropout and ran away from his parents. Pansy is quiet immature which is reflected when he says, "you know, Intuc, if you've got music in your blood....."(06)

### **Achieving Greatness, Pretension of Greatness**

Intuc believes that this kind of bloody language comes from being immature. Every time Pansy wants to attend the school regularly and become a great person like Shreemanth and Garbo. But Intuc says that anybody can achieve that greatness in the country. He explains of his own experiences that he wrote four stories and won the state fame. He also believes that he would be world famous one day as the people go on gossiping about him and his works. When Pansy asks him if he were great, Intuc replies that he is not great. He felt that he was disgusted being famous and great. In fact the people are fools, they call him great, but he never feels within himself, such greatness. He feels that the stories and the poems are all a hoax. He is doing everything to become famous. Because fame is a sort of pleasant allegations foisted upon one's name. Even if he stops writing all that sort of nonsense, people won't forget him. Intuc becomes angry when he observes that Pansy is not paying any attention to his words. Pansy is vexed up with Intuc and blames him how he would torture the students in the class room. Intuc says the students are a kind of wild sanctuary if he wants to keep them under control, he must pretend to possess the wisdom of sages, the chastity of saint and the ascension and the strict moral code of monks.

### **Jealousy about and Showing Off of Proficiency in English!**

Suddenly, Shreemanth enters the scene which interrupts Intuc's speech. He feels that his rudely interrupting behaviour in the midst of his highly intellectual and committed discourse is not becoming of gentleman. Shreemanth gets angry and uses bad language; perhaps he is jealous of Intuc's proficiency in English and tells him, "here, You, cut out the fancy language, and how dare you call me a gentleman huh? I am standing (standing) here." (09)

When Intuc advises him to use good English, he becomes very angry and feels insulted. He couldn't tolerate his advice, so he wants to take revenge on him like a police officer. When Intuc asks where he gets the arrest warrant from, Shreemanth says he gets it from society. Finally, Intuc asks what charges are against him. Shreemanth explains in a ridiculous manner that,

You are guilty of using impossibly clean languages shorn of all obscenities, thus causing acute embarrassment to those who are in the habit of using abusive language..... You are both guilty of expressing contempt and disgust towards drinking, meat-eating, smoking, opium, hemp, and LSD..... Instead of having a bit of fun with good looking chicks and letting them go, you sloppily indulge in pure and sublime love, and, in your attempts to remain celibate, you either soil your underwear at nights, against which habit the entire race of dhobis is soon going to launch a protest in the form of demonstration, or/and you lock yourself in the toilet at odd hours of the day and night causing great inconveniences to others. There are many such charges, but you will hear them in court. Now come on. Come along. (10)

### **In Judgment**

The three of them walk around. Shreemanth sits down in an elevated chair and he feels himself like a judge in the court. He asks Intuc to explain against his charges.

The philosophy of self-deception is again reflected in the words of Intuc to cover up his real nature. He says,

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Milord, we are decent, white-collar, middle-class intellectuals. However eloquent speech outside the court may be, it is a sacred tradition with us, going back thousands of years and fully endorsed by society, that our lips shall remain sealed at the time of judgment. (10)

### **Self-deception – An Important Characteristic of Humans**

It can be said that human beings are susceptible to self-deception because most people, like Intuc, have emotional attachment to beliefs, which in some cases may be irrational. Robert Trines suggests that deception plays a significant part in human behaviour. He also says that it has been theorized that an instinct for self-deception can give a person a selective advantage; based on the rationale that a person can believe his own 'lie.' Here Intuc's statement enables the audience to believe his distortions; he will not present such sign of deception and will therefore appear to be telling the truth.

### **Names Reveal the Personality**

Of the foursome, Shreemanth alone, the earthiest of all, has a name for himself. The others carry their role in their names. The play is in a theatrically effective and crystallized projection of the prevalent attitudes, vague feelings and undefined frustrations growing at the hearts of the three young men.

### **Language Becomes the Most Effective Tool to Reveal the Character**

Playwright's harsh language, bold body language, abrupt breakdown of dialogue, and restless pauses succeed in conveying the stifling state of the protagonists' existence and their physical desires.

It is seen in the words of Shreemanth very clearly what he has in his mind about Garbo.

Come off it, yaar. Who's bickering? Aren't we all involved with Garbo? I mean, I certainly am, only physically. If this is so, and is openly admitted to be so, and Garbo doesn't seem to mind, why the hell are we chucking weighty words at each other? Sheer hypocrisy. And we don't want that. Do we? (17)

### **More as Sex Symbol**

With this one can understand that they are all involved with Garbo, and treat her as a sex symbol. But Intuc treats her differently. He wants to see Garbo as Garbo only. Physically and morally, they feel that they don't have the right to define the character of Garbo. As far as Intuc is concerned, Garbo is a challenge. He feels that all this business about a woman being an enigma is a myth. Once she is understood, nobody wants to look at her again. Once she is explored, the thrill is gone. He also feels that a woman should be able to satisfy fully, and yet withhold a part of herself from someone like Shreemanth. It is seen when Shreemanth asks Intuc to tell about Garbo, the promiscuous-woman and enigma, Intuc tells that, "even after fulfilling the needs of all the three of us, a part of her still remains untouched." (19)

### **Garbo – Centre of Desire**

It is clearly indicated that all the three men have the desire for Garbo in the play when Shreemanth says: "now the three cheers for Garbo the sex-Machine." (20)

They have been waiting for hours for the arrival of Garbo, but she feels it is nonsense. Garbo's character draws both our dissatisfaction and sympathy. Hers is a waste of a potentially creative life. Elkunchwar portrays her as a woman condemned to hopelessness and a deranged mental state on account of thwarted desires and unfulfilled urges. Garbo imagines that she is trapped in absurdity with all her strengths and limitations, muddling through meaningless existence. Her pervading sense of loneliness is the result of an anger which enfolds her hatred for a world that compels her to sacrifice herself and render ceaseless routine duties as a sex machine. Elkunchwar gives vivid picture of her existential angst boiling with rage.

## Confrontation with the Moral Brigade

There is a short respite when they come together in a comic piece of a play-acting in which they confront the neighbourhood moral brigade. Even in his Party there is a little tragedy in the play. Spiritual isolation is signified by a comic failure of communication when characters are collectively faced with the reality of life. But exhausted by the effort, they sink into a spell of self-pity, and once Garbo goes out for a while, a piece of information dropped by Garbo casually- that she is pregnant- suddenly occupies centre stage. A new background opens up at once. For the two older men, initially at least, it is a question of shirking responsibility; but faced with their own smallness and cowardice, they make a turnaround, seeking salvation in a collective fatherhood exclaiming in the words of Intuc that,

We are doomed people, we have neither seen, nor experienced, nor created anything beyond filth. Let us grab this opportunity. It's our only hope, our only chance. We will create something beautiful out of this filth. The world will know that there is a life somewhere which is beautiful, pure, fearless, innocent.... And Garbo we can't achieve this without you. (40)

But even Intuc spells it out, extremely well, Garbo has her doubts:  
It's very beautiful and all that. To be the mother of a beautiful thing! (Practical.)  
But do we have the guts to see the whole thing through? Suppose we suddenly get cold feet? And there are all the other difficulties. If we decide on this, I'll lose nearly a year, and all my contracts will have to be cancelled one after the other.  
What guarantee then of finding work again after the year's over? (40)

She simply wonders when Shreemanth wants to transfer some money to the name of the child.

You have all gone mad. Right now you're getting drunk on your own words.  
Suddenly one day you'll come to your senses and then there will be no escape.  
(41)

## **Self-Centred and Lacks Motherly Love?**

After having observed Garbo's reluctance to be a mother of child, Pansy feels that she doesn't have even a bit of motherly love in her. There is only one reason that pregnancy should scare Gabro: society hates woman and kids, particularly it hates teenage woman. It especially hates teenage unwed pregnant women who get knocked up under unapproved circumstances. She feels that the new born is not legally bound to be an approved representative of the state. She feels that the whole business of the fatherhood and motherhood is nothing but a crass hypocrisy. Garbo does not attach her thoughts or ideas to any fixed nature or essence. She gives preference only to her emotions and the thoughts that overpower her that moment. Instead of developing any constructive vision, her mind envisages pessimism and hollowness in her life and that makes her to complicate the relationship with everybody. She is a hypersensitive and an intolerant woman who exerts her ill temper towards different personalities holding different mind-sets.

## **Inner Conflicts Caused by Contradictory Dispositions**

We also find her to have inner conflicts due to contradictory dispositions within her own self. Garbo is a woman above the average. She is a combination of the real and the unreal. Her ideas and activities are governed by her immature mental attitudes. She feels herself to be a call girl who flits from one man to another man. Despite her disreputable life, she expresses her desire to be loved by someone and

To love somebody one day. To lose myself in love. Is this possible? There's a heap of ashes within me. Will I find one life ember in it? I have no more strength left. Will I be able to live intensely again? (41)

## **Diffident Character**

Garbo also believes that she is not a proper woman even though she has three men to love, but she feels that a woman does not need love. In fact she only needs to give and this is because she has everything inside her, the fountain of life whereas a man is hopelessly

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inadequate. She feels so much emptiness and inadequacy in her, those women are just amazing and they can do anything and need nothing because they have it all anyway. That is why a man goes after a woman to get what he hasn't got. It reflects in the words of Intuc,

This is your chance. Your life will once again shine forth like the sun, and the child will bloom like a flower in the warmth of your light. Garbo, Garbo, Garbo, a new life is beckoning you. Don't reject it. It's our only chance. Garbo this is our only refuge. Our only chance to create something beautiful. You are life itself. We will do anything for you. You only have to say the word. We'll do it. Come Garbo, come. Come and stand in the centre. You are life. We bow our heads before you. Garbo, Garbo. (42)

### **Protective Escapes**

Although, Elkunchwar's characters are in contact with each other, sometime it is difficult to maintain a complete self-centredness. As a result each of his characters must have one or more protective escapes to which he resorts. In fact this play is filled with escapes from social reality, which reminds of his Party

All the three men fall under the spell of their own words and the dream they conjure up their only refuge, their only chance to create something beautiful. Finally the Act ends with an adoration of the Dream. The characters elevate it to a ritual plane.

SHRIMANTH, INTUC , PANSY

You are life

And the root of all life.

The spring of all hope,

The fulfillment of all happiness

Are you. You are the beginning of belief.

You are the everlasting.

All future sons are in your womb.

Give us your light.

Give us your son.  
He will burn up darkness and destroy it.  
Retribution in the face of injustice,  
Compassion in the face of suffering,  
Sympathy in the face of calamity,  
Courage in the face of death.  
This he will be. He we will be creation out of destruction.  
Mother!  
Mother!  
Mother! (43)

### **Visionary Spell**

The visionary spell nags over Act II for a while, with Intuc's saying,

INTUC: I can understand now the joy of those poor people felt when they saw the new born Jesus in the manger. (45)

He also experiences that, "I'm weighed down by a feeling of deep respect." (48)

But the spell slowly dissipates through Act II, as they realize that Garbo has lost the child while shooting a stunt scene. For instance she has a pathological need to lie. Here Garbo is the witness to the brutality, who says that,

It was during a camel race. He said he would never have included the shot had he known about me. Poor chap felt terribly guilty. He kept insisting it was entirely his fault..... I'm playing the role of a Lomani girl..... second heroine.....terribly fiery, and terribly passionate..... And terribly beautiful. (Pause.) They could have used my double, but I just didn't think. (49)

### **The Last of the Lost Civilization**

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Garbo is the last of lost civilization. She has found solution in the arms of the three young men who are at the beginning, not the end, of cycles. Intuc is very passionate, violent, primitive, a second-generation pole who is battling his way up from the bottom. Garbo is depicted as the victim of the collapse of the society. In the second Act of the play, the tension shakes through the action and becomes more melodramatic.

When she announces that she is pregnant, the child is their only hope of creation, the redemption to their damned existence. The symbol of all three men clinging to Garbo is especially powerful. They feel that she is the mother woman who has the power to procreate and re-introduce the meaning into their lives. The plot of the play is, how each character searches for the escape route- how in the first Act the three men bare their sexual urges in relation to Garbo, how later they are afraid to face the reality that Garbo is pregnant. It also tells about how even in her pregnancy they look for their own salvation.

### **Striving to Make Real the Dreams**

It is quite appreciable for the playwright to bring the class of the young people striving to realize their long lost dreams in the play. Mahesh Elkunchwar is indeed very courageous to talk about women being treated as sexual objects and also gay inclination while keeping the play in a traditional structure which makes the play entirely different from others.

Suddenly when the dream shambles, the fragile community-Intuc, Shreemanth and Pansy- is on the edge of break up, Pansy starts wanting to go home, and Intuc starts retreating to fashionable obscenity.

Let's return to filth. The world we desired was not for us, could never have been. (Laughs bitterly.) We were idiots, out to turn dreams into reality. (Pause.) Let's go back our world now. The world of filth. As a punishment. And as a sort of consolation too. (51)

### **Accumulated Filth**

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But the filth profile rates here with a series of exposures and confessions. When Pansy wants to go home, Shreemanth says that he cannot leave them. He feels that he has already been with them and their part of world, which has completely been caught in its vicious circle. It reminds us that all the characters who attend the party in Party are wrapped in their web. Just like Shreemanth, Barve has everything he wants pomp and glory. Yet, there is in him a feeling of insecurity. He doesn't want anyone to reach zenith. Shreemanth insists that their life is more beautiful than Pansy's parents as they are blackened by the smoke and ugliness. But Intuc feels that it's just a kind of figment and imagination and also says that the filth is the only truth. On one hand, Shreemanth doesn't want to face the brutal reality that he is a homosexual; on the other hand he wants Garbo forever.

### **What Characters Perceive**

Intuc believes that there is some invisible force against them, which is trying to inflict them. So they find Garbo, the only way to face such invisible forces. These invisible forces are trying to crush them and force them into filth. And, therefore, they want to create their own world of filth before these powers can plunge them into it. It is, indeed, reflected in the words of Intuc, when Pansy wants to go home, he says, "there is no escape for you." (51)

Pansy eventually realizes, as in Sartre's No Exit, that there is no escape for the protagonist. The fulfillment of his love does not provide him with a refuge for escapism either, and similarly Indrajit's visit to London further frustrates him, and he verges on suicide; he fails in this regard too. He concludes: The past and present are two ends of a single rope Therefore, the play Evam Indrajit is in the absurdist tradition in that we do not comprehend anything significant, meaningful and traditional in it. Neither does it possess a logical or coherent plot.

There is another extreme by Pansy, when he charges Shreemanth with homosexual assault.

Pansy says that,

He used to barge into the bathroom. So I began locking the door from inside. He took off the bolt and threw it away. He had all the hangers removed from the bathroom so I couldn't take my clothes in with me but had to come out to dress. He's always hanging around in my room when I'm changing. (54)

Shreemanth cannot bear to face such reality and so he wants to name the child after him only to cover up his physical weakness. But here the domination of the homosexual theme in the play becomes quite explicit in *Garbo* and of which Mahesh Elkunchwar is absolutely aware.

### **Difficult to Face Reality**

Shreemanth affair with *Garbo* clearly fits into Sartrean concept of love which is that it is a desire to possess other's consciousness. Therefore the play is unconsciously coloured with Sartrean existentialism. The theme is evolved through the dreams, despair and disillusionment of Shreemanth.

In this affair, of the three, Shreemanth is more passionate to *Garbo* to possess her because suddenly and without warning, *Garbo* offers herself to Pansy and secondly, he later discovers that he is not responsible for the child in the womb of *Garbo*.

### **Love – The Very Essence of the Absurd**

Mahesh Elkunchwar has considered love from the beginning as the very essence of the absurd. Like many writers, he uses man's sexual adventures to reveal his essential silliness but goes beyond many writers in his insistence that it is not necessary any sense, in any kind of love, nor does he deny its power.

Love is essential but it has entirely different significance for each. Shreemanth needs love to cover up his physical weakness or satisfy his impotence. To him, it is the physical act of love

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and more. Garbo's sensibility is the key to her approach to love. She feels that she needs someone not to fulfill her sexual desires but to protect her. She is described in terms of society, and not in terms of her own existence. Unlike Indrajit, who prefers to be called Amal, Kamal or Vimal and conform to the dictates of society or the doctrines of tradition, she never cares for the society.

Repeatedly, Pansy keeps saying that he wants to go home or else he would kill himself. He has already shown in lot of frustrations from the beginning of the play. He feels, above all, that he is only disliked by the parents. He loves Garbo who has given him some temperamental physical pleasures. Garbo terribly feels that she is responsible for corrupting Pansy. She confesses that,

I played around with him just for fun. Then it became a habit. An enteraining game. (Pause.) But he attached different meaning to everything. (To Intuc.) Do you know the kind of places he has followed me to in broad daylight? He became addicted, and I was responsible. He would throw tantrums, cry, rage, threaten me into giving myself to him. I gave in each time, because I was either fed up, or annoyed, or in the mood for a lark. I should have hardened my heart at least once. (Pause.) Pansy, you're still young. (58)

### **Can She Live Alone?**

But at one stage, in spite of non-conformism, Garbo feels that she cannot live alone. She is feeling sick. Hence the only way for her is to continue to face the cameras again and again with phony postures and gestures. She, sometimes, feels that she should have got married, but she is in frustration. She suffers from periods of depression. She obviously knows that she could continue in the films any longer. And there are many times when she feels deep-down restlessness. Besides she doesn't even have faith that someone would marry her because,

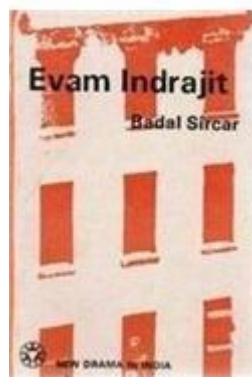
Men who danced around me two years ago are now at the most willing to have me as a keep. The proposition has actually been made to me. (Laughs.) I must give it serious thought. Maybe two years from now they won't even want this way. (64)

### **Garbo is an Illusion**

According to Mahesh Elkunchwar, Garbo is nothing but an illusion that they have built for themselves. As it is already said there is some kind of inescapable force which doesn't even kill them. They are depicted as the cowards; moreover, they demand Garbo to commit suicide if she doesn't give them new lives. Intuc says, even the youngest boy of all of them, Pansy, is also unable to escape from the ultimate disillusionment. Because one day he will surely realize with a shock that he too has started slithering through mud. So he feels that nobody escapes ultimate disillusionment. They are living in illusions, perhaps they love illusions. Now their loneliness increases, when their illusions fade one by one.

### **Badal Sircar's *Evam Indrajit***

We can find the same characters in Badal Sircar's *Evam Indrajit* which discusses a number of issues that we face as a part of growing up. It's a play about Amal, Vimal, Kamal, Indrajit, Manasi and Aunty- it tracks their lives from carefree college-goers to anxious job searching professionals to the baggage of family life and through all this the Writer takes us through the rigmaroles of Indrajit's mind, his fears, apprehensions, his romance and his heart-break.



It is also a projection of the attitudes, fears and frustrations of the educated urban middle class of the 1960s. The somber existentialism draws attention to the crisis of the individual. It is pessimistic and holds out little hope for those who value ideas, dreams and poetry.

### **Cause for Celebration**

There is a course of celebration for Intuc, when he admits his ugliness because of Garbo that he is not capable of writing honestly. Because he feels, rightly, he never lived honestly in his life. In contrast to Intuc the writer in *Evam* Indrajit emphasizes of a purpose in life apart from the basic biological functions in an age of science. Modern man has become anti-romantic, dry, logical and scientific in his attitude. This precisely is the reason that the writer is perplexed, for, the protagonist Indrajit whom he has got for his play is a man who thinks realistically but dreams romantically.

Having frustrated with mental torture Garbo decides to tell the truth that the abortion was not an accident but she killed her own baby. She tells them:

I wanted to punish him. He didn't come to my tent. I went to his one night, because I wanted a role in his next film. He sniggered. He laughed at me. (Pause.) I couldn't bear it. He'd been like that from the beginning, taking every opportunity to insult me. And when I went to win him over, do you know what he said? He pointed at the camels and said, 'Go to them. That's what you want.' (Pause.) I didn't even have a second heroine's role. I was playing the ageing elder sister. I had about three scenes to do. (Pause.) When I did the camel scene my entire body was being churned up, and I kept praying, let it happen, oh God let happen. And it did. When I felt the warm blood streaming down, I screamed. Now let me see. Just let me see his miserable face. (65)



The three young men are astonished, but Garbo feels very happy that she has seen them for what they are and their inner minds. She is very glad as the child has luckily escaped from such vicious circle.

### **Anxiety, Guilt, Despair and Sin**

Kierkegaard always writes about anxiety, guilt, despair and sin. Sin, according to him, can be defined as despair at not willing to be oneself or at willing to be oneself before God. When one is not able to perform an act according to one's will one falls in despair. According to Heidegger, man in despair considers himself to be a victim of external conditions, but when he comes to understand that the trouble is within, he intensifies his predicaments. He finds that he is standing on the ground of nothingness and suffers from the dread of death, a version of insecure feeling. Dread is a type of fear mixed up with indefiniteness. The realization of the contingency of one's own indefinite situation in the world creates anguish. Sartre also considers anguish to be the outcome of man's uncertainty. Anguish of death and the notion of nothingness suggest his loneliness.

### **Inability to Assimilate Truth**

Intuc can't assimilate the truth and starts to blame her that she is false and coward. Finally, he asks her to leave the place as she cheated him. Garbo calmly replies that he had deceived himself first:

You should never have expected so much out of me. I'm an ordinary woman of flesh and blood. You burdened me with all sorts of imaginary virtues. I carried on for as long as I could. But I couldn't keep up the pretence forever. That doesn't mean I have done any wrong. And anyway, who are you to make demands on me? 26

### **Difference between Man and Woman**

Mahesh Elkunchwar has precisely shown the difference between man and woman. People are caught in a cycle of time in which the events change, but people are the same. Here the man Shreemanth is unable to fulfill his dreams and his existence in it, but the woman Garbo decides to cope with it. Finally, before she is killed or murdered, by Shreemanth, she internalizes her triviality and compartmentalization. It reminds us one of his women characters Damayanthi in Party, who believes that there is strange compulsion. Damayanthi knows that her life is artificial, and there is nothing in her life. She too lives in a world of hustle and bustle.

Mahesh Elkunchwar develops a character of Shreemanth, which represents not the universal, but the very male ego of a generation. The playwright is very conscious of existential loneliness of the human condition. He is aware of man's helplessness before the overpowering forces of circumstances. He is conscious of the fact that the very condition of life dooms, man to failure, and there is nothing any one can do about it.

Man is basically a social animal. He has become socially engrossed to the extent that his individuality has dissolved in its framework. He fails to define society, and society defines him. The ongoing frustrations, burning problems and inconsistencies in life have become a routine for him, as they have for the social order.

### **Relevance of *Evam Indrajit***

It is in such an age that *Evam Indrajit* holds relevance. The very title *Evam Indrajit* exemplifies modern man's state of identity crisis. Unlike Manasi in *Evam Indrajith* who gradually merges with Auntie and accepts the tradition, Garbo can't do it.

Shreemanth retains the identity of a radical; he turns into an existentialist who has to carry his impotence in the rest of his life. On one hand, the drama in *Garbo* grows out of a claustrophobic real-life situation pushed to the limits of endurance, burgeoning into a surreal holy drama that is too unreal and brittle to stand the test; on the other hand *Evam Indrajit* is a story of discontent, of unanswered questions, of repressed emotions and above all, it's the story of the youth. Satyadev Dubey rightly asserts that *Evam Indrajit* presents the residue of the

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middle class who have failed to adjust, align and ceased to aspire and also those who are enmeshed in the day-to-day struggle for survival. It is a typical absurd play such as Ionesco's *Amedee* or Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in that it exemplifies the hollowness and futility of a pseudo-modern existence.

Badal Sircar was asked in an interview whether he considered *Evam Indrajit* as a political play, or an existential play; he said that he never considered the play as a political play, and he did not know the philosophy of existentialism. Therefore the play can be perceived as an Absurd play. The play keeps on echoing that our existence is a pointless particle of dust. Therefore the play is unconsciously coloured with Sartrean existentialism. The theme is evolved through the dreams, despair and disillusionment of the protagonist Indrajit.

### **Absurdism**

According to Martin Esslin, Absurdism is the inevitable devaluation of ideals, purity, and purpose. Here too the play *Evam Indrajit* is deduced as nothing but an expression of despair. Nevertheless, we can discern a ray of hope in the dreams of Amal, Kamal and Vimal. Indrajit is no exception in this regard. As critics perceive him as the mythical Sisyphus preparing to carry on the burden of his existence, we discover a ray of hope in his words. "This is the keynote of our initiation. There is no pilgrimage, just journey. No destination but only the road which itself is our pilgrimage. Herein lies both deity and destination."

### **Mahesh Elkunchwar as an Existentialist**

In this context Mahesh Elkunchwar can be called an existentialist. The existentialist concludes that human choice is subjective because individuals finally must make their own choices, without help from such external standards as laws, ethical rules, or traditions. Because individuals make their own choices, they are free; but because they freely choose, they are completely responsible for their choices. The existentialist emphasizes that freedom is necessarily accompanied by responsibility. Furthermore, since individuals are forced to choose

for themselves, they have their freedom-and therefore their responsibility - thrust upon them. They are condemned to be free.

For existentialism, responsibility is the dark side of freedom. When individuals realize that they are completely responsible for their decisions, actions, and beliefs they are overcome by anxiety. They try to escape from this anxiety by ignoring or denying their freedom and their responsibility. But because this amounts to ignoring or denying their actual situation, they succeed only in deceiving themselves. The existentialist criticizes this flight from freedom and responsibility into self-deception. He insists that individuals must accept full responsibility for their behaviour, no matter how difficult. If an individual is to live meaningfully and authentically, he or she must become fully aware of the true character of the human situation and bravely accept it.

### **Recurring Themes: Sex and Death**

Sex and death are recurring themes in Elkunchwar's plays. He sees sex and sexuality as part and parcel of the communication crisis. The sexual act can be the culmination of total communication and in that case, it becomes a total pleasure. But sometimes, people seek communication through the act, when that fails, they suffer great pain. He, therefore, says, a promiscuous person is in need of help, not condemnation. Promiscuity is a symptom of an illness; it is not an illness in itself. It really wonders when society will realize these things and death of course. It's a universal enigma.

*Garbo* is in fact a contradiction of ideas. Elkunchwar, probably, may be thinking the modern life, as it is lived in Bombay. He is actually taking the people far away from the values and traditions that are kept off. They are in confusion and they want to be non-conformal. In their ability to become non-conformal, they went into a mess. In describing the muddle he tried to make use of the fact that Garbo pretends that she is pregnant and she says that she lost her pregnancy, and all these three people differently react to it. But the fact of it is, tradition and modernity, as such; they don't take a person far off.

Elkunchwar, literally, would like to interpret saying that these non-conformal attitudes and living don't take anywhere near the solution. He feels that it is only confusion. Elkunchwar, himself must have undergone the same kind of confusion when he stopped writing for eight years. During this period, probably, Elkunchwar wanted to become a non-conformal, but he realized the futility of non-conformal, and came back to conformism.

It is also said that the playwright has profusely conveyed the sense of emptiness and unrest of the four protagonists in the play. Even though Elkunchwar's concerns originally centre on the issues of his own generation, he manages to convey the sense of purposelessness, emptiness and unrest that defines the lives of the play's four protagonists to the contemporary audience, without compromising on Elkunchwar's signature, hard-hitting realism.

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## Case Markers in Liangmai

Widinibou Charengna, Ph.D.

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### Abstract

This research paper is intended to explore the nature of case marker in Liangmai language. Case is a grammatical category which expresses the semantic relation between a noun phrase and predicate. Case is a feature that expresses a syntactic and semantic function of the element that carries the particular case value. The case in Liangmai is affected by using suffixes. Liangmai case markers which indicates the suffixes and post positions are added to the nouns and pronouns or to the number affixes to denote case relations. While in English, the major constituents of a sentence can usually be identified by their position in the sentence, Liangmai is a relatively free word-order language. Therefore, the constituents can be moved in the sentence

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without impacting the core meaning. For example, the following sentence pair conveys the same meaning- **Wiraibou saw Akimliu**, albeit with different emphases.

1. **Wiraibou** niu **Akimliu** tu ngou ye.  
wiraibou-nom-akimliu-acc saw asp

2. **Akimliu** tu **Wiraibou** niu ngou ye.  
Akimliu-acc- wiraibou –nom- saw asp

The identity of **Wiraibou** as a subject and **Akimliu** as the object in the above sentences is achieved by the case markers /**niu**/ nominative and /**tu**/ accusative. Therefore, even though Liangmai is predominantly SOV in its word-order, correct case marking is a crucial part of making translations convey the right meaning. The aim of the present paper is to give a description of the case markers in Liangmai.

### 1.1. Introduction

Several scholars working on Liangmai or other Tibeto-Burman languages have tried to analyze the language using the models available to them through the languages known to them. This practice does not help bring out the correct description because the languages have their own specific structures. So, our main concern here shall be to emphasize the grammatical categories of case markers as found in Liangmai. The case in Liangmai is affected by using suffixes and postpositions that are added to the nouns and pronouns or to the number affixes to denote case relations. When these are used after stem, these do not affect the phonetic shape of the stem. The main cases are affixes indicating Nominative, Accusatives, Instrumental, Dative, Locative, Genitive, Ablative, Sociative and Benefactive relations.

### 1.2. Language and Language Area

Liangmai is the Tibeto-Burman language family spoken in the Liangmai Manipur and Nagaland. The Liangmai is officially recognized by the government of India on 22 December, 2011. The Liangmai are descendants of the second son of Kadingbou.

Liangmais are mainly found in Tamenglong headquarters, Tousem and Tamei Sub Divisions, Kampokpi, Supermaina and Tadubi of Senapati district of Manipur, Tening Sub-

division, Jhalukie, Peren, Dimapur and Kohima of Nagaland. Liangmai and Zeme are referred to collectively as Zeliang in Nagaland whereas in Manipur, they are recently recognized separately as Liangmai on 23 December 2011 by the Government of India.

### 1.3. The Position of Liangmai Language

In Manipur, majority of the tribal languages are not yet introduced in government educational institutions even at the primary level. Liangmai has many traditional songs, hymns, etc. but there are not many deliberately created literary works. Liangmai has not got its own script; therefore they use roman script for writing purposes.

Liangmai language has been taught up to VIII standard in government institutions both in Manipur and Nagaland. A few grammatical works have been done on Liangmai.

There are some private and government schools in Liangmai villages but so far there is no college in Liangmai dominated areas in Manipur. The medium instruction used in school is English. However, one compulsory *Lianglad* (Liangmai language) was taught at the school level.

### 1.4. The Inventory of Case Markers in Liangmai

Case is a grammatical category which expresses the semantic relation between a noun phrase and predicate. The case in Liangmai is affected by using suffixes. The suffixes and post-positions are added to the nouns and pronouns or to the number affixes to denote case relations and when these are used after stem, these do not affect the phonetic shape of the stem.

In Liangmai language, there are nine cases. These cases for which they are inflected may conveniently be named as – Nominative, Accusative, Instrumental, Dative, Locative, Genitive, Ablative, Sociative and Benefactive. And their case markers are as follows:

1. Nominative - /niu/
2. Accusative - /tu/
3. Instrumental- /niu/
4. Dative - /leŋ/
5. Locative - /gə/~ləm/



- |    |              |                          |
|----|--------------|--------------------------|
| 6. | Genitive-    | /gu/                     |
| 7. | Ablative -   | /gəsu/,/gəniu/ ~ /ləmsu/ |
| 8. | Sociative-   | /saisui/                 |
| 9. | Benefactive- | /leŋ/                    |

### 1.5. Functions of Case Markers

1. The **nominative case** indicates the subject of a finite verb: ‘*I killed snake*’ /*I niu kaniu tu kam sak ye/*
2. The **accusative case** indicates the direct object of a verb: ‘*I love him*’ /*I niu pa tu marai ye/*
3. The **instrumental case** indicates an object used in performing an action: ‘*I killed a dog with a knife*’ /*I niu tathi tu chaheng niu kam sat ye/*
4. The **dative case** indicates the indirect object of a verb: ‘*I give him money*’ /*I niu pa leng rangkang pi ye/*
5. The **locative case** indicates a location: ‘*We live in Delhi*’ /*aliu Delhi ga lung ye/*
6. The **genitive case**, which roughly corresponds to English possessive case and preposition *of*, indicates the possessor of another noun: ‘*we have a book*’ /*Aliu gu ariak bamme/*
7. The **ablative case** indicates movement *from* something, or *cause*: ‘*He has gone home from the school*’/ *pa ariakky gasu paki lam wang mide/*, ‘*where from you are coming*’ /*nang de lamsu wang lo/*
8. The **Sociative case** expresses the accompanying relationship (with, along with). ‘*He is coming with us*’/ *pa aliu saisui wang ye/*
9. **Benefactive case** denotes the being in whose interest the action indicated by the verb is done. ‘*I bought new shirt for my wife*’/ *I niu anou leng tiang kasanbo luk/liu wang ye/*

### 1.6. (a) Nominative Case

The most widely acceptable function of the nominative is to mark the subject of the sentence. This is the case which expresses the subject. This occurs with the verbs whether they are transitive or intransitive. This case is expressed by /**niu**/.

### Example:

1. i niu patu kəmsət-de  
i nom. him killed past.  
'I killed him'
2. Josep niu basi tiu ye  
josheph nom. mango eat asp.  
'Josheph eats mango'
- 3) mətom niu piuriaŋ tiu ye  
cow nom. grass eat asp.  
'Cow eats grass'
- 4) pa niu ram tu məsen ye  
he nom. ram acc. like asp.  
'He likes Ram'

### 1.7. (b) Accusative case

The noun which is directly affected by the action of the verb is called accusative case. This case denotes mainly the direct object of the transitive verb. In Liangmai language, the accusative case is marked by the suffix **/tu/**. Accusative marker in this language is completely obligatory.

Examples are as follows:

- 5) i patu luŋsa ye  
i he/she acc. love asp.  
'I love him'
- 6) i əpui tu məsen ye  
i my mother acc.like asp  
'I like my mother'
- 7) pa niu zon tu dəp ye  
he nom zon acc. beat asp.  
'He beats John'

Accusative marker **-tu** is used to the object role of a noun or pronoun.

Examples

- 8) i čəlui tu məsen ye  
i song acc. like asp.  
'I like song'
- 9) ram niu kəniu tu kəmsat ye  
ram nom. snake ass. kill asp.  
'Ram kills snake'
- 10) i niu pa tu məsen ye  
I nom. he/she acc. like asp.  
'I like him'

### 1.8. (c) Instrumental case

The instrumentality of an object with reference to an action is expressed by instrumental case marker. Instrumental case marker is homophonous to nominative marker. This instrumental case is expressed by **/niu/**. Examples are as follow:-

- 11) i niu thiŋnə tu čəgənmi niu kep sat ye  
i nom. bird acc. gun inst. shoot kill asp.  
'I killed a bird with a gun'
- 12) i niu təthi tu čəheŋ niu kəmsat ye  
I nom. dog accu. knife inst. kill asp.  
'I killed a dog with a knife'
- 13) pa məri niu siŋbəŋ hui ye  
he axe inst. tree cut asp.  
'He cuts tree with an axe'
- 14) ram niu jesi tu kəčai niu dəp ye  
ram nom. jesi acc stick inst. beat asp.  
'Ram beats Jesse with a stick'
- 15) i niu čəheŋ niu alu phəŋ ye  
I nom. knife inst. potato cut asp.  
'I cut potato with a knife'

- 16) Daniel niu məri niu siŋbaŋ hui ye  
 daniel nom. axe inst. tree cut asp.  
 ‘Daniel cuts tree with an axe’
- 17) čalikəsembopiu hai təniaŋ niu čəli təliu ye  
 potter det clay inst. pot made asp.  
 ‘The Potter makes the pot with clay’

### 1.9. (d) Dative case

Dative case is the case of the indirect object of the verb and it is usually associative with the act of giving. In the case, the animate being is affected by the verb state or action. It is realized as /leŋ/

1. i niu paleŋ rəŋkəŋ pi ye  
 i nom him rupee give asp  
 ‘I give him money’
2. əpiu niu əleŋ rəŋkəŋ ləŋkhai ye  
 my father nom me ruppe send past  
 ‘My father has send me money’
3. I niu paleŋ kəbak pi ye  
 i nom him pig give asp  
 ‘I give him pig’
4. pa niu əliu leŋ čəpiu pi ye  
 He nom us dat. medicine give asp  
 ‘He gave us medicine’
5. nə gu rouri əleŋ pi lo  
 you gen. pen me dat pi imp  
 ‘Give me your pen’

In above examples /leŋ/ is dative case in this language.

### 1.10. (e) Locative case

The place of location of an object or event is expressed by locative case. In Liangmai locative markers are /gə~/ /ləm/. It is not obligatory.

Examples are as follow:

- a)    tebəl gə       əriak khət bəm me  
table loc.    book one    prog. asp.  
‘A book is on the table’
- b)    əliu    tamei gə       wəŋ ye  
we.    tamei loc.    come asp.  
‘We are coming to Tamei’
- c)    i naiməčəŋ    inson    puŋ       məŋiu gə       tət le  
I everyday    morning hour       five loc. go asp.  
‘Every morning I go to walk at 5 O’ clock’
- e)    tethi khət    čəki    kəma gə       bəmme  
dog one    house front loc.    prog.asp.  
‘A dog is in front of the house’.
- f)    imbuŋ    luŋ -gə       intiaŋ khət bəmme  
almirah in loc.    shirt one prog. asp.  
‘A shirt is in the almirah’
- g)    pa    dənai       nagalen ləm    təd le  
he    yesterday    nagalen loc    go past  
‘He went to nagaland yesterday’
- h)    peter       sonnai       delhi ləm       təd ne  
peter       tomorrow    delhi loc       go fut  
‘Peter will go to Delhi tomorrow’

It is to be noted here that /gə/ is used in specific or particular area whereas /ləm/ used for wide or vast area, for examples:- /təbel ri gə/ ‘on the table’ but never used /təbel ri ləm/.

## 2.1. (f) Genitive case

The genitive case typically expresses a possessive relationship of noun or pronoun. The genitive case suffix is realized as /gu/. Examples are as follows:

- a)    ə-gu    əriak khət bəm me  
my gen. book one    prog asp.

- ‘I have a book’
- b) pa gu bengia wi ye  
 he/she gen. handwriting good asp.  
 ‘His handwriting is good’
- c) uise aliu gu čəki ye  
 that we gen.house asp  
 ‘That is our house’

## 2.2 (g) Ablative case

The ablative case maker is used to express separation, expulsion, source and direction of movement from one to another. The ablative case suffixes are realized as /gəsu/ ~ /ləmsu/. /gəsu/ used at the particular or specific point whereas /ləmsu/ used at the vast domain area. Examples are as follows:

- a) čəmik gəsu mikdui luəŋ kiu ye  
 eye abl. tear fall down asp.  
 ‘Tears fall from the eye’
- b) tiŋgen ləmsu tiŋriu kiu ye  
 sky abl. rain fall asp.  
 ‘Rain falls from the sky’

The ablative case marker /ləmsu/ ~ /gəsu/ is used to express out of or away from a source and direction of movement from one to another. It specifies the point in space to where something is transferred at the culmination of the action identified by the verb. Therefore, the ablative is the case of separation from the source in performing the action mentioned by the verb. This case is realized as /ləmsu~gəsu/ and it acts as a post-position as in the following examples:-

- a) məluəŋ ləmsu tədui luəŋ kiu ye  
 hill abl. water fall down asp.  
 ‘Water is falling from the hills’
- b) pa čəlu gəsu paki- ləm wəŋmi-ne

he/she paddyfield abl. house locative gone past

‘He has gone home from the field’

c) nəŋ de ləmsu wəŋ lo

you what abl. com imp.

‘Where from you are coming’

### 2.3. (h) Sociative case

The Sociative case expresses the accompanying relationship ( e.i. with, along with). This marker is /saisui/ is used in the sense of accompanying someone or used in sense of going together.

1. pa əliu saisui wəŋ ye

he we soc. come-esp

‘He is coming with us’

2. i əpiu saisui tət le

i my father soc. go asp

‘I went with my father’

3. pa niu ə-saisui wəŋ ye

he nom.my soc. come asp

‘He comes with me’

4. pa əsaisui lu čəlen len ye

he my soc. dance asp

‘He dance with me’

5. i əpiu saisui lu kohima tət ye

i my father soc. kohima go past

‘I went to Kohima with my father’

### 2.4. (i) Benefactive case

This case denotes the being in whose interest the action indicated by the verb is done. This case functions in a sentence to express the notion “for the benefit of”. Benefactive case marker in Liangmai is expressed by /leŋ/.

Examples

1. I niu ə-nao leŋ tiaŋ kəsənbo liu-ye  
i nom. my wife benef. shirt new buy asp  
‘I bought new shirt for my wife’
2. I niu əna leŋ ginpui liu ye  
he nom. my son benef. ball buy asp  
‘I bought ball for my son’
3. əpiu niu əleŋ čəp hitop luk wəŋ ye  
my father nom. my benef. shoes come buy asp  
‘My father bought a pair of shoes for me’
4. paniu əleŋ skuter liuwang ye  
he nom my benef. scooter buy past  
‘He bought a scooter for me’

In the above examples /leŋ/ is the benefactive case.

## 2.5. Conclusion

In this paper we explored the nature of the case structure in Liangmai. From the description and explanation given above, it becomes clear that Liangmai manifests a neat system of realization of cases. The case in Liangmai is affected by using suffixes. Liangmai case markers which indicates the suffixes and post positions are added to the nouns and pronouns or to the number affixes to denote case relations. While in English, the major constituents of a sentence can usually be identified by their position in the sentence, Liangmai is a relative free word-order language. The case markers in Liangmai are postpositional. So, Liangmai as a SOV language maintains the characteristics that Greenberg (1963) has attributed to SOV language that language with normal SOV order are post-positional.

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## Linguistics and Literature: Points of Convergence

Mohammad Firoj Al Mamun Khan

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### Abstract

The study maps thoroughly how different concepts and theoretical aspects of linguistics are applied in literary criticism. Diverse linguistic features are analyzed in literary criticism to highlight how they are used differently by poets and writers from the way they are commonly used. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the influence of formalistic critical practice, it has been the common pursuits of the critics to enquire how special uses of linguistic elements contribute to achieve the literariness in a text. Further, it is interesting to note that that from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century linguistic codes and conventions have been appropriated as the paradigm in a number of

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areas other than literature that, in its turn, led to the development of theories to account for different genres of literature, its narration and interpretation.

## **Introduction**

According to H. G. Widdowson, the areas that the linguistics comprises are the nature of language, its sound system, design, scope, form, meaning, and its context. In other words, students of linguistics study phonology and phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse analysis, and pragmatics. The relatively recent areas are psycholinguistics, socio-linguistics, functional linguistics, corpus linguistics. In addition, we have linguistics for descriptive purposes, for contrastive analysis, discourse analysis, error analysis, and for forensic linguistics. Students of linguistics study them to gain expertise in various fields of it and to use them in their professional fields. It is more so in case of students of applied linguistics.

One of the important tasks of linguistics students is to analyze the use of language in the context—i.e. ---various discourse types---they have to analyze social, business, political and many other kinds of discourses in order to look into how language works in the real world. They also have to analyze literary discourse. According to Mick Short, modern linguistics takes huge interest in literature. Now the concern of analyzing literature linguistically or analyzing linguistics in literature has made the latter a shared territory both to the students of linguistics and literatures (Short, 1996).

The critics who investigate linguistic elements in literature should be competent to study those linguistic elements that the writers manipulate or use in literature for special effects in meaning. Such critics use linguistic concepts, theories, models to decode text and discourse.

## **Text, Discourse and Discourse Types**

Now what is text? “When we think of a text, we typically think of a stretch of language complete in itself and of some considerable extent. He also included those small registers like the signals danger, stop, slow, etc., as text” (Verdonk, 2002).

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However, when we talk about meaning of text, it does not come into being until it is actively used in context.

According to Peter Verdonk, “This process of activation of a text by relating it to a context of use is what we call discourse.” According to Jeremy Hawthorn, (Hawthorn, 1992), discourse is language in use, not language as an abstract system.

### **Literary Discourse**

Literary discourse is different from other discourses. According to Jeremy Hawthorn (Hawthorn,1992) the general discourse is a context-bound act of communication verbalized in text that waits to be inferred. Now the communication act is mainly an interpersonal act. It involves two parties. They sometimes share contexts of different types—physical and others—like values, ideas and beliefs. So, in discourse in the real world communication has a context that is identifiable and uses language that is referential. However, in literature the contextual world is fictional and communication is not as straight as in discourse of real world.

Real world communication has two parties: the addresser and addressee. But in literature too, communication takes place in two parties: There can be addressor and addressee—but what is more in this case, this communication has another pair of addressors and addressee—that is the narrator and the readers. In those forms where narration is less like drama---or lyric poem which is the authorial monologue, the pair is the writer as the addresser and the reader as the addressee. Now the perspectives or point of view in each case changes sometimes making the literary communication different and difficult.

The criticism of literature has been a n area of studies for thousands of years. There was a time rhetoric that has quite a few common elements with linguistics was studied and evaluated in relation to literary criticism. It is from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the language came to the centre-stage in this field.

## Literary Criticism Before and After 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Literary Criticism before 20<sup>th</sup> century is roughly called traditional or humanistic criticism. Their concern was not language. According to Mick Short, “Some specialists concern themselves almost entirely with the socio-cultural background against which particular works were written, and others look at the lives of the authors and how their experiences led them to write in the way that they did.” This style of criticism mostly refers to the Anglo-American criticism before 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Now the central concern about linguistic elements started off with formalistic practice of criticism whose influence is seen in many other critical approaches that are practiced till date. Formalism has to face opposition too. There are critical schools that do not subscribe to formalism. For example—Reader-response criticism, speech-act-theory and new historicism (Abrams, 2000)

The formalist critic Roman Jakobson wrote about literariness. He emphasized the study of literariness of literature. In other words, his main focus was on not what is the meaning of certain poem. His focus was to find out how meaning is created. He wrote, “The object of study in literary science is not literature but literariness, that is, what makes a given work a literary work. Meanwhile, the situation has been that historians of literature act like nothing so much as policeman, who, out to arrest a certain culprit, take into custody (just in case) everything and everyone they find at the scene as well as any passer-by for good measures. The historians of literature have helped themselves to everything –environment, psychology, politics, philosophy, -- instead of a science of literature they have worked up a concoction of homemade disciplines” (Eichenbaum, 1998).

Jan Mukarovsky, a member of the Prague Circle, described literariness as consisting of “maximum foregrounding of the utterance,” i.e., foregrounding of the act of expression, the act of speech itself (Mukarovsky, 1964).

Victor Shklovsky said that the primary aim of foregrounding is to estrange or defamiliarize the language of literature. That is, by disrupting the modes of ordinary linguistic discourse, literature makes strange the world of everyday perception and renews the readers' lost capacity for fresh sensation. In 1817, Samuel Taylor Coleridge described the "prime merit" of a literary genius to be the representation of familiar objects so as to evoke freshness of sensation. But unlike the formalists, Coleridge believed in the ability of the author to express a fresh mode of experiencing the world, the formalist stresses the function of purely literary devices to produce the effect of freshness in readers' experience.

According to MH Abrams, phonemics is one of the areas of phonology that deals with phonemes—smallest unit of functional speech sounds. This is an area that is largely exploited by the poets. That is to say, poets take huge interest in speech sounds and their function to produce heightened effects and meaning particularly in poetry. Literary students or critics should have strong sense of these sounds system to understand the effect the manipulation of these sounds can achieve.

To have an overview about the sound system of English vocabulary and to see difference in meaning and effect that little change of "smallest sound unit" can bring, we can look at the following examples.

In the word *pin*, if the initial speech sound is changed, we get *pin-tin-din* and with the change of medial sound we get *pin-pen-pun*. Again, if final sound is changed, what we get is *pin-pit-pill*. Phonetic differences are found in dialects.

Saussure proposed in this regard that "the same phoneme" within a language is not determined by the physical features of the speech sound itself, but by its difference from all other phonemes in that language, i.e., by the differentiability, within a given language, between a particular speech unit and all other functional speech units (Abrams, 2000).

Morphology is another aspect of linguistics that deals with “the combination of phonemes into morphemes and into words. Morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of speech sounds within a language.”

Some morphemes like man, open and run make complete words while others constitute the parts of the words such as grace, dis, ful, etc.

We find another type of “phoneme combinations” that do not make any morpheme but these provide a “loose-boundaried area of meaning”. For instance, *fl* in the words *flash, flare, flame, flicker, flimmer* -- all these words suggest a common meaning -- a kind of moving light. In another series with the same initial sound, we get fly-flip, flap, flop, flit, flutter—signifying some kind of movement in air.

The terminal sound, ash, for example, can also be a part of the words -- bash, crash, clash, dash, flash, gash, mash, slash -- signifying sudden violent movement. Such combinations are called phonetic intensives or sound symbolism or phonaesthemes.

According to MS Abrams, utterance is made by the stream of speech sounds that in its turn made by phonemes, morphemes and words. Moreover, supra-segmental features of language that consist of stress, juncture and intonation are also studied by the literary critics and linguistics.

Another area of linguistics is syntax -- “combination of words into phrases, clauses and sentences.” These structures are extensively explored in stylistic approach. Syntax is studied both in case of poetry and fiction. In syntactic structures, regularity of constructions is found and these are explained by the syntactic rules “operative in the linguistic system or langue”. Roman Jakobson used a distinction between two types of rules in a fully formed sentence -- syntagmatic (rules of combination) and paradigmatic rules (rules of selection) (Hawthorn 1992).

Semantics is another field of linguistics—study of meaning of words, phrases, clauses, sentences and larger linguistic units. In this regard Saussure introduced the idea of sign consisting of inseparable union of signifier and signified.

### **Manipulation of Linguistic Features for Literary Effects**

Poets, fiction writers and playwrights manipulate lexical, the phonetic, morphological and syntactic and other features of linguistics in their arts for special effects in the meaning that foregrounds the literariness of their texts. In their manipulation, we commonly find some kind tampering or deviant use of these elements. Let us read the following examples where deviations are made in various structures to achieve literary effects. The examples are featured in Mick Short's *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose (Learning about Language, 1996*.

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-  
Dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-drawn-drawn Falcon---  
(Gerard Manely Hopkins "The Windhover")

In the above quote, we find a graphological deviation in the word *kingdom*. By separating *kingdom* into two morphemes we can think hard about the meaning of the two morphemes. Besides, he might also hints at the word *dom* as meaning *doom* which is historically the same morpheme. *Doom* means judgment. So by this special use, the poet has foregrounded the king and judgment parts of the word for special significance. Besides, look at the alliterative words in which the similar consonant sounds has lent a rhythmic resonance to the lines. Though not directly connected to linguistics, alliteration or prosody has some overlaps with phonetics.

"Think you're in  
Heaven?  
Well-you'll soon be  
In H  
E  
L  
L-"



Michael Horovitz, “Man-to-Man Blues”

In the above example, the graphological deviation is used to suggest “the long descent to hell visually on the page.”

“The boys are dreaming wicked or of the bucking ranches of the  
Night and the jollyroggered sea.

(Dylan Thomas, Under Milk Wood”)

In this example, the poet has makes two words together to make a compound noun-you know jolly ro(d)ger means the pirates flag of skull and bones. The poet has joined the two words together and then added to make it a participial adjective that modifies the sea. The result of this double invention is a sea that is “haunted” by piracy and is associated with “romantic adventures.”

In the following example you will see how Hopkins uses a verb achieve and uses it as a noun even though there is a noun form of achieve i.e. achievement. By using this form, the poet has foregrounds the extent of the achievement of the bird in flight and also the physical energy.

“... My heart in hiding  
Stirred for a bird,--the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!”  
(Gerard Manely Hopkins “The Windhover”)

Let’s look at another example—

“Even the aerobatic swift  
Has not his flying crooked gift.”  
(Robert Graves, Flying Crooked.”

Instead of more balanced construction, i.e., his gift of flying crooked, the poet has rearranged the word order in the noun phrase for the rhyming scheme of the couplet.

In another example, we find a deviation of morphological structure. By adding the suffix less to “perhaps” is a deviation. By this deviation the poet is suggesting a contradictory quality of heaven that is a mystery with no uncertainty.

Look at the example:

“Perhapsless mystery of paradise”

(e.e. cummings, “from spiraling ecstatically this”)

Let’s look at this example –about manipulation of short vowels and stop consonants. You know there are short vowels and long vowels. Also, some consonants are long while some short. Stop consonants and the liquid sounds /l/ and /r/ are shorter than fricatives /f/, /v/, /s/, nasals /n/ and /m/ and the affricates.

Look at the line.

“Only the stuttering rifles’ rapid rattle”

(Wilfred Owen, “Anthem for Doomed Youth”)

The density of short vowels and consonants symbolize the subject of matter and heightens the effect.

## **Stylistics in Literature**

Stylistics is a system of literary criticism that heavily draws on linguistics. It came as a result of the influence of the Russian formalist and Czech formalism on American Criticism. Stylistic method of literary criticism derived its impetus from formalistic critical principles that laid emphasis and insisted on studying the textual features of literature. Formalism diverged from the traditional criticism the primary concern of which was to look into the contextual background and affective qualities in a text. In other words the formalists mainly focused on the form, rather than on contents -- the proposed meaning in the text and “freed themselves from the traditional correlation of form-content and from the conception of form as an outer cover or as a vessel into which a liquid (content) is poured” (Eichenbaum, 1998). Likewise, modern stylistic method

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focuses on various textual features and considers form and meaning to be inseparable, (Bolinger, 1981). Similar opinion was also given by Stanley Fish in his *Is There a Text in This Class?*

The range, parameter and the nature of textual features that stylistics encompasses are divergent. Some analysts use concepts from linguistic theories such as paradigmatic and syntagmatic distinction, speech act theory and transformational linguistics while some concentrate on “the study of the use of language in literature” involving the entire range of general characteristics of language.” At any rate, after 1960s, stylistics incorporates both traditional criticism and traditional rhetoric. Its difference from these earlier practices is that it insists on being objective by discovering the rules by which linguistic elements and patterns accomplish their meanings and literary effects in a text (Abrams 2000). Then again, some critics include also the literary discourse analysis as the area where they focus on the narrative techniques, perspective and their implication on meanings. (Leech and Short *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*. Longman 1981)

Notwithstanding the differences in the approach, there are a few common linguistic features that stylistics investigate and analyze. They are phonological, lexical, syntactic and rhetorical features. Sometimes, discourse analysis is added to the range.

## **Dialect**

Dialect is a social indicator reflecting social connotations and aspects of the speaker’s identity. “Dialect is language variety related to the performer’s provenance or affiliations in a geographic, temporal or social dimension” (Catford, 1965). In stylistic analysis of literature, dialects are closely studied focusing on the shifts in language styles based on varying circumstances. Dialect represents the raw emotions, feelings and thoughts of the uneducated rural people. In analyzing dialects, mainly the deviations in vocabulary, spelling, different sentence constructions from the standard ones, etc. are scrutinized. Consider the following quote:

*“Dos’t mind how you could jerk a trout ashore with a bramble, and not ruffle the stream, Charl?” said the deposed keeper was saying. ‘T was at that I caught ‘ee once, if you can mind? (Hardy, The Mayor of Chasterbridge, Chapter 36)*

In the above quotation, the constructions like *dos’t mind* (Do you remember), *Twas* (it was), “*ee*” (you) are the markers of dialect.

## **Lexical Structure**

It is a part of stylistic analysis that investigates the word structure as to whether compound words, monosyllabic words, polysyllabic words, archaic words, or blending or clipping are used in the novel or poetry for special reasons. The poets or fiction writers sometimes may coin new words too that is called neologism. Besides, vocabulary also plays contributory role in lending the language either sweet tone or harsh tone. Besides, writers create image which is called poetic logic through the lexical chain. For rhythmic resonance too, writers exploit vocabulary in novel. Studying lexical structures is also related to the analysis of formal cohesion. The following excerpt is an example quoted from *The Mayor of Chasterbridge*, where repetition and reiteration are used for a purpose.

*“Casterbridge announced old **Rome** in every **street, alley, and precinct**. It looked Roman, bespoke the art of **Rome**, concealed dead men of **Rome**. It was impossible to dig more than a foot or two deep about the town fields and gardens without coming upon some tall soldier or other of the Empire, who had lain there in his silent unobtrusive rest for a space of fifteen hundred years. He was mostly found lying on his side, in an **oval scoop in the chalk**, like a **chicken in its shell**; his knees drawn up to his chest; sometimes with the remains of his **spear against his arm, a fibula or brooch of bronze** on his breast or forehead, an urn at his knees, a **jar at his throat, a bottle at his mouth**; and mystified conjecture pouring down upon him from the eyes of Casterbridge street boys and men, who had turned a moment to gaze at the familiar spectacle as they passed by” (Hardy, *The Mayor of Chasterbridge*, 54).*

In the above quote, the repetition and reiteration of some words are used for textual cohesion. This analysis is a part of discourse analysis.

### **Syntactic Structure**

In this section, the critics analyze the special features about syntactic structures. Critics investigate if sentences are periodic or loose. They also check the clause structures---either anticipatory or trailing, periodic pause, inversions, fronting, cleft sentence, end focus and so on. They find out the significance of using varied structures by writers and focuses on how special use of the syntax affects meaning.

Let's look at the following periodic sentence in which the main theme or message is held up till the end of the sentence

*“The young man, who could now read the lines and folds of Henchard’s strongly-traced face as if they were clear verbal inscriptions, quietly assented; and when people deplored the fact, and asked why it was, he simply replied that Mr. Henchard no longer required his help” (Hardy, The Mayor of Chasterbridge).*

### **Discourse Analysis**

Discourses such as conversation in a novel, poetry, narration, dramatic dialogues are all sometimes analyzed in stylistics. Both discourse analysis and pragmatics are studied in linguistics. In analyzing literary speech, speech acts, cooperative principles such as politeness, conversational maxims, terms of address etc. are taken into consideration. Besides, textual cohesion in narration can be also studied. For extra-linguistic context, deictic are analyzed. These are textual cues that point to the listeners’ or readers’ attention to the temporal and spatial situation.

### **Structuralism, Linguistics and Literature**

Roman Jakobson and Tzvetan Todorov, a narratologist, influenced French structuralism. After the Russian Formalists Boris Eichenbaum, Victor Shklovsky and Roman Jakobson were suppressed by the Soviets in early 1930s, the centre of formalism moved to Czechoslovakia, where the movement was continued by the Prague Linguistic Circle. It included Roman Jakobson, Jan Mukarovsky and Rene Wellek. Jakobson and Wellek became professors at American Universities.

Structuralist approach is used not only in interpreting literature but also a number of other disciplines, namely, anthropology, social science, etc. This analysis parallels a literary novel or a poem to a parole that needs to be examined to find out the underlying structures, that is, langue that is responsible for the special arrangement or organization of parole.

This concept of langue developed by Ferdinand de Saussure has been taken up by a number of other disciplines. “The aim of classic literary structuralism is not to provide interpretations of an individual text, but to make explicit, in a quasi-scientific way, the tacit grammar (the system of rules and codes) that governs the forms and meanings of all literary productions.

It is not mimetic (the view that literature reflects or imitates reality) criticism; neither is it expressive criticism (the view that literature is an expression of the author’s feelings and emotions).

The salient features of structuralism are closely linked with various linguistic concepts. MH Abrams (Abrams, 2000) has pointed out the following features of structuralism.

a) A literary work is a text that is written by “a play of component elements according to specifically literary conventions and codes.” This kind of text does not have any truth value though it may create an illusion of reality.

b) “The conscious self” is a construct, “a product of the linguistic system”.

c) An author’s mind is a “space” within which “a system of literary language, conventions, codes and rules of combination gets precipitated into a particular text.”

d) “Reader as a conscious, purposeful, and feeling individual is replaced by the impersonal activity of reading.”

e) In structural critical approach in literature,” the emphasis is on the impersonal process of reading which brings into play the particular conventions, codes and phrases and sentences that constitute a text.”

f) “Barthes abandoned his previous belief in the scientific aspirations of structural concepts that structural codes and conventions create the meaning. In his book *The Pleasure of the Text*, he distinguished between two types of text—the *readerly* text such as realistic novel that tries to close the interpretation by insisting on specific meaning and *writerly* text that aims at the ideal of a galaxy of signifiers, and so encourages the reader to be a producer of his or her own meaning according to not just one code but to a multiplicity of codes.”

Structuralism sees close relations between structures underlying literature and structures of human consciousness. To the structuralists, a particular literary text is not what they are mainly interested in as they think it as a surface phenomenon. The main focus of the structuralists is the universal underlying science of all literary productions. The concept has been appropriated from the structuralist linguist Saussure who called the individual utterance “parole” and the underlying system or structures of language “langue.” Similarly, the structuralist critics parallel parole to the individual genre of literature and langue to the underlying system of all literary productions.

According to Lois Tyson, structuralist approaches to literature have tended to focus on three areas of literary studies i.e. the classification of literary genres, the description of narrative operations, and analysis of literary interpretation.

## **Literary Genres**

Northrop Frye (Frye, 1957) conceives “theory of myth” as the underlying principles of four types of narratives, namely, comedy, romance, tragedy and irony/satire. He relates romance with mythos of summer. For example, Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*, Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. The romance represents the world

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of adventure in which “brave, virtuous heroes and beautiful maidens overcome villainous threats to the achievement of their goals.”

He puts double genre irony/satire under mythos of winter. Irony, according to Frye “is the real world seen through tragic lens. It is a world in which protagonists are defeated by the puzzling complexities of life”. Examples are Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*.

He puts tragedy under mythos of autumn. In tragedy, “a hero with the potential to be superior, like a romantic hero falls from romantic height into the real world.” Examples: Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *Othello* and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

He puts comedy under mythos of Spring. In this genre, the hero gets into “threatening, real world difficulties”. The hero then successfully overcomes all difficulties and achieves happiness.

## **Linguistic Paradigm**

Narratology is a theory that studies the functions of narrative. A good deal of literary criticism is now done based on narratology that comes under the structuralist approach. A.J. Greimas takes up the binary system that is mainly the concern of linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, and uses it in interpreting common structural patterns in literature.

Tzvetan Todorov finds a similarity between “structural units of narrative” and “the structural units of language: He draws a parallel between structural units of narrative to the structural units of language. In this system, literature is thought as a construct modeled on a sentence.

Characters---proper nouns

Characters’ actions----verbs

Characters’ attributes ----adjectives

Propositions----sentences

Sequences-----paragraphs

Other categories----negation, comparison and modes

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Linguistic paradigm - the language system with its components have now been appropriated by the narratologists and applied in interpreting literary structures. Gerard Genette “uses tense to designate temporal relations between narrative and story; mood to designate forms and degrees of narrative representation; and voice to designate the narrative situation or its instance” Hawthorn (2003, 191).

## **Semiotics**

Semiotics which is a relatively new field of study owes its origin to Saussure’s concepts of signs as used in explaining linguistic system. Though semiotics has gone beyond linguistic signs, it has adhered to a common system i.e. sign that mainly belongs to the territory of linguistics. Semiotics, like in other disciplines is also used in literature. In literary semiotics is interested mainly “in literary conventions: the rules, literary devices, and formal elements that constitute literary structures.

## **Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction**

Going against “the restrictive and limited critical practice” (Nayar,2010) of structuralism, a large number of theorists of Post-structuralism or deconstruction have come up with extraordinary views and concepts about language and its functions. Their concepts and arguments have considerably changed the way of literary studies. Such post-structuralists and deconstructionists as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Paul De Man, J. Hillis Miller, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Jacques Lacan have brought unconventional concepts about the nature of meaning, relation between language and reality, subjectivity, self, identity formation etc that have strong implications in the study and criticism of literature.

## **Conclusion**

The study of literature now is largely associated with wide ranging linguistic theories and practices. Unlike traditional literary criticism where focus was given on the writer’s biography to

interpret and determine meaning of a literary work, literary criticism after 20<sup>th</sup> century is more concerned with the formal elements i.e. linguistic elements that constitute literature. Critics now mostly engage in finding how those elements are exploited in a special way to achieve literary effects. Besides, meaning associated with language is also at the centre of current critical engagement of literature. Further, the investigation of meaning, its relativity and illusiveness or the permanence in literature, brings it to bear on the philosophical dimension of linguistics. It is seen from the above study that literature and linguistics have many meeting points. It has become quite common now that both students of literature and linguistics are almost obligated to have knowledge and ideas about both the disciplines.

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# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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## A Study for Identifying the Cases of Metaphorical Expressions with Inappropriate Phraseology in Argumentative Essays Written by Persian English Language Learners

Maryam Jafari, M.A. Student in TEFL  
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### Abstract

This study mainly investigated the cases of linguistic metaphor in a contextualized learner corpus data, which gathered the argumentative essays written by the Iranian EFL learners in one of the English Language Institutes. Identified metaphors in this naturally-occurring data provided a good basis to find differences in applying metaphors across the assigned levels, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In order to answer the question, Is there any relationship between the amount of learners' incorrect metaphorical use and the amount of their strongly

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affected metaphorical expressions by their first language background?, a learner corpora was designed by the researcher which gathered the argumentative essays written by the selected English-learners. The learners were selected according to the information acquired from the questionnaire and their score in the CEFR criteria-based English Language proficiency test. The answer to this question indicates whether learners are able to use metaphorical expressions presenting their own perspectives with appropriate phraseology or not. The result of this study points to the use of metaphorical inaccurate materials at A2 and B1 levels. In general, the rate of first language-influenced errors and the metaphorical errors indicates the significant role of first language transfer in making such errors in this data.

**Key terms:** Figurative Language, Metaphor, Linguistic metaphor, Conceptual metaphor, Corpus linguistics, Learner corpora

## **Introduction**

In the area of Second/ Foreign Language teaching, still there are many under-researched areas which need to be explored, such as metaphor among figurative languages. Recently, with the development of cognitive science, artificial intelligence and the study of the brain and the mind, the study of metaphor and the application of metaphor mechanisms in language education have attracted more attention of interdisciplinary researchers. Cognitive linguistics regards metaphORIZATION as a natural feature of language, which results from conceptual metaphORIZATION, which is clearly and purposefully displayed in the formation of words, semantic changes of words, collocation of words as well as learning of cultures. Accordingly, this feature of language brings us a great deal of enlightenment in English Language Teaching domain.

In Second/Foreign language learning, emphasis is usually placed on grammatical competence as a formalist orientation or on communicative competence, a functionalist orientation, to improve learners' proficiency in the target Language (Danesi, 1988). After that, metaphorical competency, as Gardner & Winner, 1978; Low, 1988; Littlemore, 2001; Littlemore & Low, 2006 name it, function as a beneficial supplement. Therefore, the new notions of

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metaphorical competency, conceptual fluency (Danesi, 1995) and metaphoric intelligence are now in focus of Language researches.

Among second language researchers, Danesi (1992, 1995) and Johnson & Rosano (1993) are among the first who worked on figurative Language competence. Metaphorical competency is an umbrella term which has been applied to refer to an individual's ability in comprehension and production of metaphor (Danesi, 1993; Littlemore & Low, 2006). The increasing number of researchers in favour of introducing conceptual metaphor theory to second language area, producing Language learning materials, lesson plans and exercises aimed at raising learners' awareness of metaphor in general and the motivations behind particular sets of second language figurative phrases, indicates the prominent place of metaphorical competency studies in second language researches. Moreover some second language researchers interested in conceptual metaphor have examined formulaic expressions, phrasal verbs and idioms. Littlemore (2001) asserts that learners who have a holistic cognitive style have priority in metaphorical processing over those with an analytic cognitive style. It means that teachers should improve learners' analytic skills as well as their holistic cognitive skills. On the role of metaphor in second language productive knowledge of learners, Littlemore and her colleagues (2010) investigated the ways in which metaphor contributes to successful spoken interaction between native and non-native speakers of English. However, they (2012) investigate the development of learners' metaphorical use in their writing across different levels of second language proficiency.

Despite the broad span of research in favour of CS-style approach in L2 area, the CS proponents are generally silent on the challenge of helping learners develop fluency. One reason might be because of insufficient number of studies on this aspect of pedagogy. Even the empirical research about metaphorical competency is comparatively later and weaker. Another reason might be due to the general fact that, according to the complex and multifaceted nature of Language learning, any suggested pedagogical method will apply moderately within a Language curriculum.

To control the multilateral effects of any Language learning method, including CS-informed instruction, the *Four Strand* framework which is proposed by Paul Nation (2001, 2007) is highly beneficial. As claimed by Nation, effective second language learning depends on four types of stimuli, which are in terms of Nation four strands.

The first strand is meaning focused input. It refers to high exposure to intelligible input, the importance of which was recognized by Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis.

The second strand is meaning-focused output. This is relevant to the desirability that learners experience gaps in their second language communicative abilities which they subsequently try to fill. The importance of this strand is accentuated by Swain's (1993) (Pushed) Output Hypothesis.

The third strand is fluency development .This apply to actions that improve the natural retrieval and effortless application of the Language elements the learners have been learning. This strand is highlighted by Dekeyser (2001, 2007).

The last (fourth) strand is Language-focused instruction. It is where teachers or materials writers try to draw learners' attention to specific Language features. In people's mind, this fourth strand is mostly associated with the term "teaching", since it may be proactive, which means that target materials are taught then put into practice (Ellis, et al., 2002). To put in a nutshell, Nation claimed that a balanced Language curriculum should pay attention equally to each of the four strands. It suggests that CS-style approach must apply in combination with other approaches within a relatively confined space of the curriculum. Therefore, according to Kecskes's (2006) conclusion, the persistence of the problem of non-native likeness in the production of second language learners at all levels of education even with a high level of grammatical proficiency do not attribute only to the lack of metaphorical competency and conceptual fluency in the target Language. The lack of pragmatic skills, such as effective factors, he claims, plays a crucial role in the selection and production of learners utterances.

At present, the debates over metaphorical competency approach have not reached to a convincing result about approaches for enrichment of metaphorical competency (MC). Tests for evaluation of learners' MC and many other issues in this regard as well are still under much controversy.

In general, theories of metaphors which found their place in different areas of knowledge by the impressive work of Lakoff & Johnson (1980), address metaphor both linguistically and communicatively and also conceptually and symbolically. Such works have highlighted that metaphor is not just a 'pleasing linguistic ornament' or 'a device of the poetic imagination', but a process of human thought and reasoning. So, figurative Language competence opens up a new field of research in the area of second language studies.

The cognitive developments in the process of studying metaphor proved that metaphor is a highly systematic process and is pervasive in various registers. By the shift toward the study of metaphor in empirical, naturally-occurring discourse data, the common Language used by people in particular, real-world context using empirical corpus data from different types of oral and written discourse has come into focus by the researchers.

This study mainly investigated the cases of linguistic metaphor in a contextualized learner corpus data, which gathered the argumentative essays written by the Iranian English Language learners in one of the English Language Institutes. Identified metaphors in this naturally-occurring data provided a good basis to find differences in applying metaphors across the assigned levels, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The following hypotheses were formulated in this study to highlight this important issue in the area of second language learning from a different perspective:

There will be a close relationship between the learners' incorrect metaphorical use with their strongly affected metaphorical expressions by their first language background.

## **Methodology**

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## Subjects

At first, 300 female English learners from the Iran Language Institute which is located in Arak were selected randomly to participate in this study. Regarding the goal of this research, the age of the participants ranged from 8 to 28 years old. The participants were selected from the pre-intermediate to advanced level of English proficiency. It is expected that the learners at these levels would accommodate the purpose of the study. The crucial factor in the current research was assigning the correct levels of English proficiency of the learners who will perform the allocated writing tasks. But, for minimizing the effects of other factors such as age, gender, social and educational status, the required questionnaire was used to classify the participants of each level as closely as possible in middle class. For achieving this aim, a background questionnaire was distributed among the learners to elicit the above mentioned information. After analyzing the data obtained from this questionnaire, the number of participants was reduced to 220 learners. The selected learners took part in an online placement test according to CEFR standards. Unfortunately the number of the learners who participated in this online test reduced to 180 learners. This may be due to various reasons such as difficulties faced in accessing the Internet and many other problems. After assigning their level of English proficiency in accordance with the criterion of this study, one writing task from 150 learners were collected.

## Materials

The following materials were used in this study:

**1. A Background questionnaire** which elicited demographic information relating to the subjects' socio-educational status.

**2. A General English Proficiency Test** which determined the proficiency level of the participants in English.

**3. The CEFR self-assessment grids for A2-C2 levels** which formed a series of descriptions of language abilities which can be applied to any language and can be used to set clear targets for achievements within language learning. Each of the six levels (A1,A2,...C2)

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contains a series of Can Do Statements that describe the various functions that one expects a language learner perform in reading, writing, listening and speaking, at each level. It has now become accepted as a way of benchmarking language ability all over the world. The Can Do statements for writing ability are provided in appendix IV.

**4. A learner corpora** which was the collection of authentic texts produced by Iranian EFL learners and stored in an electronic format.

**5. A Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIPVU)** involves identifying as metaphor any lexical unit that has the potential to be processed metaphorically.

## **Procedures**

The following procedures had been taken by the researcher to meet the goals of this study:

- 1- Designed the required questionnaire.
- 2- Distributed the questionnaire and implemented the online English language proficiency test.
- 3-Analysed the collected data and grouped learners under different levels of English language proficiency.
- 4-Collected the written essays by these selected learners.
- 5-Prepared an electronic learner corpora based on the information gathered from the stage 4.
- 6-The corpora was divided into lexical units and entered into an Excel spreadsheet, with one lexical unit on each line.
- 7-All potentially metaphorically used lexical units in the corpora identified with the MIPVU Metaphor Identification Procedure (Steen, et al 2010).
- 8-The metaphors were categorized into open and close-class.
- 12-Described the learners' metaphorical use in qualitative terms.
- 13-Finally, the percentage of errors that involved metaphor and also the L1-influenced errors were identified in this real L data.

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## Results and Discussion

Another feature that describes the nature of linguistic metaphors in this learner corpus was the involvement of non-native-like cases in the use of linguistic metaphors. However it must be mentioned that all the misused items identified here are not necessarily caused by conceptual or cognitive transfer, “notably, errors could also result from other causes and thus cannot necessarily serve as proof of conceptual transfer; they may, however, be numbered among its manifestations” (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p. 142). Nevertheless the identification of non-native-like instances revealed the most salient difficulties of learners when producing linguistic metaphor consciously or unconsciously. In order to determine the extent of incorrect metaphorical use in these writings, the percentage of metaphors at each level that contained an error of some sort were calculated. Then the researcher analyzed all the errors for first language influence. After that the proportion of errors that contain metaphor and also the proportion of these errors that affected by first language-influence calculated.

Finding of such misused items represent the most salient difficulties faced by learners when producing (consciously or unconsciously) instances of linguistic metaphor. For dealing with the last research question, the percentage of metaphors containing general errors and also the percentage of metaphors containing types of first language-influenced errors were determined by the researcher.

**Table 4.2.9 Metaphors Containing Errors at Each Level**

Level	Total metaphors	Metaphors containing general errors	Metaphors containing L1-influenced errors	Percentages of metaphors containing general errors	Percentages of metaphors containing L1-influenced errors
A2	229	4	3	1.74 %	1.31 %

B1	259	5	4	1.93 %	1.54 %
B2	230	2	1	0.86 %	0.43 %
C1	317	0	0	0	0
C2	545	0	0	0	0

The identified metaphors containing types of first language-influenced errors were represented in the following table.

<b>A2</b>	<b>metaphors containing types of L1-influenced errors</b>
	In modern life air is <u>bad</u> ,
	Computer has a <u>up</u> speed, <u>up</u> accuracy,
	Modern music is a very <u>harsh</u> ,

<b>B1</b>	<b>metaphors containing types of L1-influenced errors</b>
	In past if someone get <u>hard</u> sick,
	<u>On</u> modern/ traditional life
	That can <u>make</u> cure all of illness,
	<u>Resolve</u> a question,

Such investigation provides useful teaching tips for Language instructors in a way that it informs us at which level learners are able to develop their metaphorical competency, at which level they try out new metaphorical expressions and subsequently make more errors, to what extent their metaphorical errors is related to first language-influence and whether their first language-influenced metaphorical errors decrease gradually across level as they get more competency in the target Language metaphorical concepts.

According to the third research question, to see whether the percentage of errors involving metaphor increases across levels, the results indicate no significant increase in metaphors containing both general and first language-influenced errors in the data. Through the

obtained results, it is difficult to determine which level would be an experimental stage for metaphorical use among these learners. In the previous section we observed that the learners at C1 and C2 levels apply open-class metaphors, and as it would be expected naturally, the rate of errors must increase at the levels in which the learners use new metaphorical concepts but in this data, at C1 and C2 levels, no case of metaphorical errors produced by the learners is found.

In relation to first language -influenced errors, it is generally accepted that non-proficient learners greatly depend on their native Language knowledge to express their opinions in the target Language. As they develop their target Language knowledge, it is expected that this reliance decreases gradually. In the area of metaphorical use, Language learners must be aware that to some extent the concepts of the target Language differ from their native Language and also in the ways they are coded according to the structure of target Language. In this data we do not come across any type of metaphorical inaccurate use or the cases of first language-influenced errors at A2 and B1 levels and in upper level. But the lack of such errors in the two upper level (C1, C2) does not prove that these learners are very proficient in applying metaphor, because this analysis was done on a restricted amount of data which certainly does not reveal all of the aspect of the learners' knowledge. It was also noticed that the learners faced difficulties entering into the new domain of metaphorical use. All these demand further investigation and collection of related data in this regard. Such limitations restrict the generalizability of the results.

The overall results may be summarized as follows:

- The frequency of metaphorical use by learner does not increase significantly across the levels.
- No cases of open-class metaphors found until the C1 level and its use does not overtake the use of close-class ones.
- Rate of first language-influenced errors and the metaphorical errors indicate the significant role of first language transfer in making such errors in this data.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

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A Study for Identifying the Cases of Metaphorical Expressions with Inappropriate Phraseology in Argumentative Essays Written by Persian English Language Learners

The last result of this study point to the metaphorical inaccurate us at A2 and B1 levels. The rate of metaphors containing general errors is correlated with the rate of first language-influenced metaphorical errors in these two levels. It might be due to the fact that beginner learners strongly rely on their first language for expressing their views in second language. But lack of such errors in other levels by no means indicate the high ability of learners on these levels in applying metaphorical Language, because the Language data of this study was collected in a very restricted domain both from the view of the variety of essay subjects and genres. This study only tried to get a general view about the Persian EFL learners' metaphorical competence at the Linguistic level. The comparison of the obtained results with similar studies suggested that the performance of these learners on the subject of metaphorical competency was not fine at all and it needs further investigations by the English Language researchers and teachers.

There have been various difficulties and obstacles in the route of second language learning. Numerous factors affect the process of mastery in many aspects of second language learning. This study was an attempt to shed light on the aspect of conventional Language metaphorical ability which was used by these learners. It is hoped that this study offers some help to Language pedagogy for improving metaphoric competency among EFL learners. The identification of the skills involved in second language metaphor production on behalf of the teachers would be very beneficial as it assists them to further expand the metaphorical comprehension and production ability among their learners.

Figurative expressions, including idioms, proverbs and daily expressions in figurative use are ubiquitous; teachers as well as learners cannot avoid dealing with them. Enhancing learners' figurative thinking should be an important part of teaching. It is imperative that teachers design and implement instruction for figurative-language interpretation to increase student comprehension. Furthermore, communication across cultures will be clarified and enhanced as ELLs gain a better understanding of the depth and richness of another language.

There is hope that the findings of this research provided useful recommendations for teachers, text book writers, and syllabus designers to consider these important and subtle changes

in the process of second language development, to adopt their goals and assign the expected performance of English learners in conformity with the goals. The results of such studies would show which level of proficiency is suitable for introducing metaphor. The results would also inform the teachers about the onset of metaphorical use in a specific level, their errors and the time that they will have most difficulty with first language influence, so the teacher must tolerate the learners' errors. Such studies would also help Language teachers to identify the skills involved in second language metaphor production, so they can foster this ability more widely among their learners.

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## Tones in Meiteilol: A Phonetic Description

Meiraba Takhellambam

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### Abstract

Meiteilol is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Manipur, a state in the northeastern part of India. Meiteilol has a relatively simple tonal system which is in contrast to the other Tibeto-Burman languages in the area; it has a two way tonal contrast in isolation:

- a) H Level Tone (*i*)
- b) HL Falling Tone (*î*)

The main claim of the paper is that the *Tone Bearing Unit* in Meiteilol is the Rhyme. The paper also claims that the relative simplicity of the tone system of Meiteilol is due to its rich consonantal inventory which can occur at the Coda position and that the realisation of tonal contrast can be affected by the Coda consonants.

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## 1. Phonological Sketch of Meiteilol

Meiteilol has 20 consonants. Meiteilol exhibits three categories of consonantal constriction; Stops /p t k c m n ŋ p<sup>h</sup> t<sup>h</sup> k<sup>h</sup>/, Fricatives /s h/, and approximants /w j l/. Meiteilol has voiced stops in allophonic distribution, and the lateral approximant has an allophone which is a trill /r/.

Table 1. Consonants in Meiteilol

	<i>Labial</i>	<i>Alveolar</i>	<i>Palatal</i>	<i>Velar</i>	<i>Glottal</i>
<i>Plosive</i>	<i>p</i> <i>*b</i>	<i>t</i> <i>*d</i>	<i>c</i> <i>*j</i>	<i>k</i> <i>*g</i>	
<i>Plosive Aspirated</i>	<i>p<sup>h</sup></i>	<i>t<sup>h</sup></i>		<i>k<sup>h</sup></i>	
<i>Nasals</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>		<i>ŋ</i>	
<i>Trill</i>		<i>*r</i>			
<i>Fricatives</i>		<i>s</i>			<i>h</i>
<i>Approximant</i>	<i>w</i>		<i>j</i>		
<i>Lateral Approximant</i>			<i>l</i>		

pa ‘eyelash’    ta ‘spear’      t<sup>h</sup>a ‘moon’      ca ‘wax’      ka ‘room’      k<sup>h</sup>a ‘south’  
 ma ‘bedbug’    na ‘ear’      ŋa ‘fish’      sa ‘animal’    ha ‘yam’      wa ‘word’  
 ja ‘tooth’      lâ ‘banana leaf’

Meiteilol has 6 vowels.

	Front	Centre	Back
High	<i>i</i>		<i>u</i>
Mid	<i>e</i>	<i>ə</i>	<i>o</i>
Low		<i>a</i>	

Table 2. *Vowels in Meiteilol*

## 2. Syllable Structure

The Syllable structure in Meitei Lol has a defining character; all the verbal roots are monosyllabic, as are all nouns and other categories. The affixes are also monosyllabic; when these affixes are added to the different stems they are analysable into their monosyllabic form. So, all the polysyllabic words can be analysed to be made up of monosyllabic root and the affix/affixes.

The canonical syllable structure of Meitei lol is :

$(C_1)(C_2) V (C_3)$

Where  $C_1$ = All consonant other than a voiced plosive.

$C_2$ = *j/w*

$C_3$ = approximants, nasals, voiceless unaspirated plosives.

The consonants which can occur in the Onset position are:

	<i>Labial</i>	<i>Alveolar</i>	<i>Palatal</i>	<i>Velar</i>	<i>Glottal</i>
<i>Plosive</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>k</i>	
<i>Plosive aspirated</i>	<i>p<sup>h</sup></i>	<i>t<sup>h</sup></i>		<i>k<sup>h</sup></i>	

<i>Nasals</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>		<i>ŋ</i>	
<i>Fricatives</i>		<i>s</i>			<i>h</i>
<i>Approximant</i>	<i>w</i>		<i>j</i>		
<i>Lateral Approximant</i>			<i>l</i>		

Table 3. Consonants in the Onset Position

The consonants which can occur in the Coda position are:

	<i>Labial</i>	<i>Alveolar</i>	<i>Palatal</i>	<i>Velar</i>	<i>Glottal</i>
<i>Plosive</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>		<i>k</i>	
<i>Nasals</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>		<i>ŋ</i>	
<i>Approximant</i>	<i>w</i>		<i>j</i>		
<i>Lateral Approximant</i>			<i>l</i>		

Table 4. Consonants in the Coda position

### 3. Tones in Meiteilol

There are two tones in Meiteilol citation form the *Level Tone* (H´) and the *Falling Tone* (HL). Hyman (2010) describes three stages for studying a tone system. The first stage is to determine the surface tonal structure, for which he advocates the study of words in isolation. The second stage would be to find out tonal alternations. The third stage is the tonal analysis and a formulation of a theoretical model of the language.

This paper discusses the first stage and gives an account of the surface tonal contrast and the *Tone Bearing Unit* in Meiteilol. For recognition of a tonal contrast two kinds of data are primarily considered; first, pairs of words which differ just by pitch and meaning (*minimal pairs*), and second, it is generally required that there is an unconditioned pattern of contrastive pitch. The Data for the study were recorded in citation form of words.

A list of *minimal pairs* is listed below:

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tîn	‘insect’	tin	‘saliva’
kêj	‘granary’	kəj	‘tiger’
t <sup>h</sup> ôŋ	‘door’	t <sup>h</sup> oŋ	‘bridge’
sîŋ	‘firewood’	siŋ	‘ginger’
sễm	‘hair’	səm	‘basket’
mî	‘man’	mi	‘spider’
mâ	‘bedbug’	ma	‘3PS’
lû	‘fishing trap’	lu	‘head’
wâ	‘word’	wa	‘bamboo’
î	‘blood’	í	‘thatch’

At this point to describe Meiteilol tone any further, we need to consider the importance stressed upon the coda position of a syllable for the study of tone especially in Tibeto-Burman languages. In this process, the ramification of the CVC structure into CVS *smooth syllables* and CVT *stopped syllable* (where S= sonorant and T= obstruent) is inevitable. In Meiteilol the realisation of tonal contrast can be affected by the coda consonants. The tone on the *stopped syllables* can be identified with the tones on the *smooth syllables*, where the *stopped syllables* have voiceless unaspirated plosives at their coda position. As described above, Meiteilol displays a rich inventory of consonants which can occur at the Coda position of a syllable.

Hyman (2007) claims that the tones found on *stopped syllables* (CVT) must always be a subset of those found in *smooth syllables* (CVS).

#### 4. Tones on Smooth Syllables (CVS)

Meiteilol can have both Nasals and Approximants in the coda position of syllables. An interesting observation worth mentioning here is that in Meiteilol /l/ and /n/ are phonemically distinctive, but at the syllable final position they are in free variation so either of them can occur in this position. So all the words with /l/ at the syllable final position could also have an allophonic nasal /n/ in the syllable final position. It is observed that the Nasals in

the syllable final position do not block the spread of tone from the vocalic nucleus to the coda position. This observation corroborates with the model suggested by Hyman (1973) which says that sonorants exert no blocking effect, but rather allow any tone to spread through them. Yip (2000) opines that all the sonorant-final syllables being bimoraic is the *Tone Bearing Unit* in Cantonese. Similarly, in Meiteilol the sonorant-final syllable particularly nasal-final syllable have two moras and so acts as the *Tone Bearing Unit*. And that the nasal-final syllables can carry both the H Level tone and the HL Falling tone. In Meiteilol the approximants behave more like consonant rather than the traditional semi-vowel so the vowel + semi-vowel combination is treated as sequences involving vowel + consonant. The lateral approximant /l/ has an allophone which is a trill /r/ which occurs in the intervocalic position. It is observed that the laterals function more or less like the nasals in Meiteilol. The approximant-final syllable display all the attributes displayed by the nasal-final syllable. The approximant-final syllables also carry both the H Level tone as well as the HL falling tone. And the syllable with approximant in the final-syllable position is also a *Tone Bearing Unit*.

	<i>Labial</i>	<i>Alveolar</i>	<i>Palatal</i>	<i>Velar</i>	<i>Glottal</i>
<i>Nasals</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>		<i>ŋ</i>	
<i>Approximant</i>	<i>w</i>		<i>j</i>		
<i>Lateral Approximant</i>			<i>l</i>		

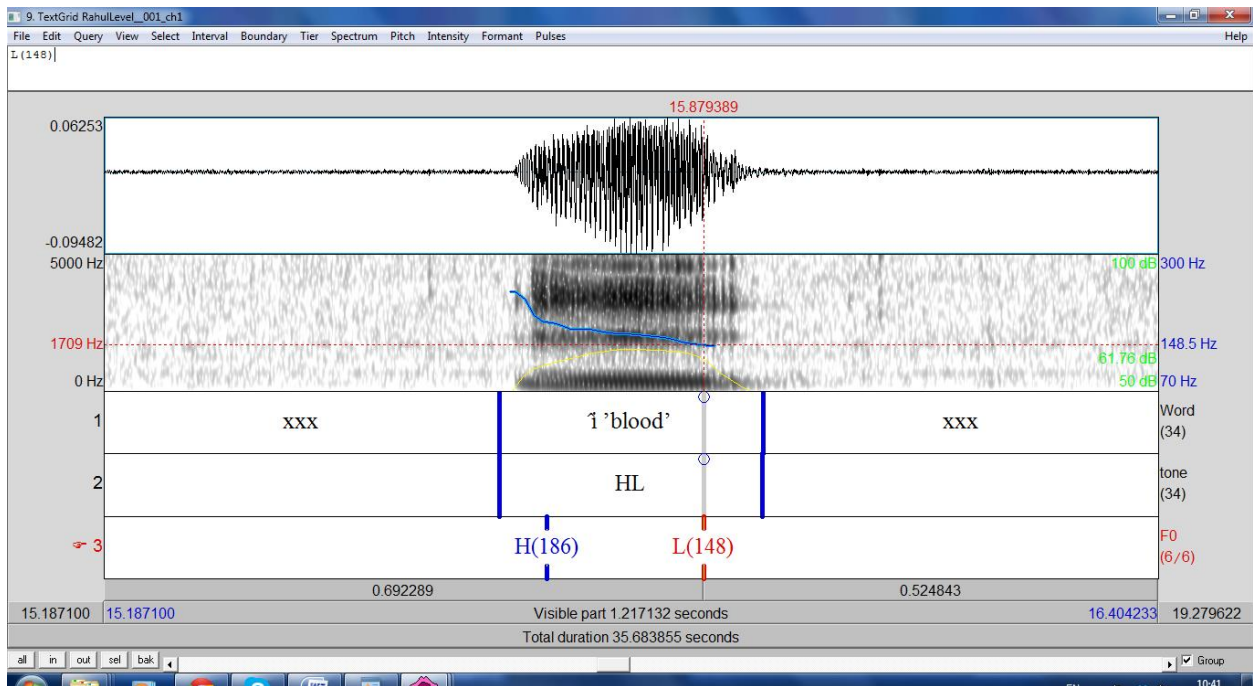
Table 5. Sonorants which can occur in the Coda position.

A list of Minimal Pairs with sonorants in the coda positions:

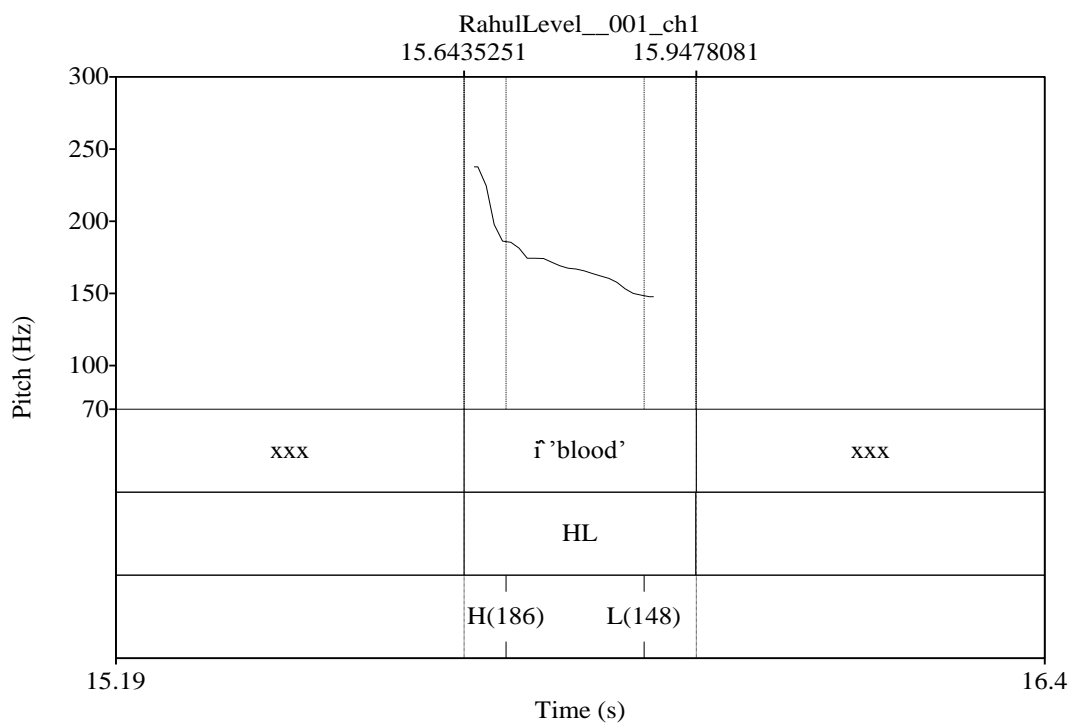
k <sup>h</sup> ôŋ	‘leg’	k <sup>h</sup> óŋ	‘canal’
kâŋ	‘mosquito’	káŋ	‘a game’
k <sup>h</sup> ôj	‘navel’	k <sup>h</sup> ój	‘bee’
mêŋ	‘dream’	móŋ	‘crematory’
hûj	‘dog’	húj	‘rivet’
sêŋ	‘hair’	sóm	‘basket’

ûn	‘skin’	ún	‘snow’
lêj	‘flower’	lój	‘tongue’





*Fig. Spectrogram and Pitch contour for the word î 'blood'*



*Fig. Pitch contour for the word î 'blood' which has an Initial F0 of 186Hz and Final F0 of 148Hz.*

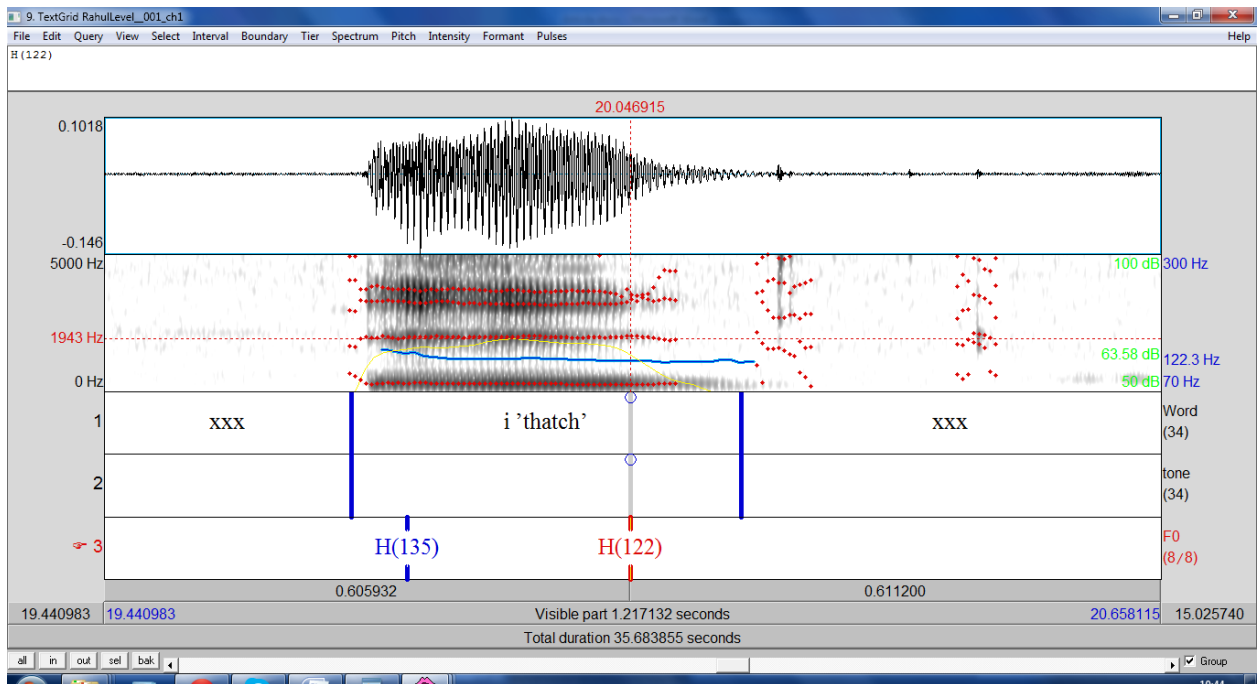


Fig. Spectrogram and Pitch contour for the word *i 'thatch'*

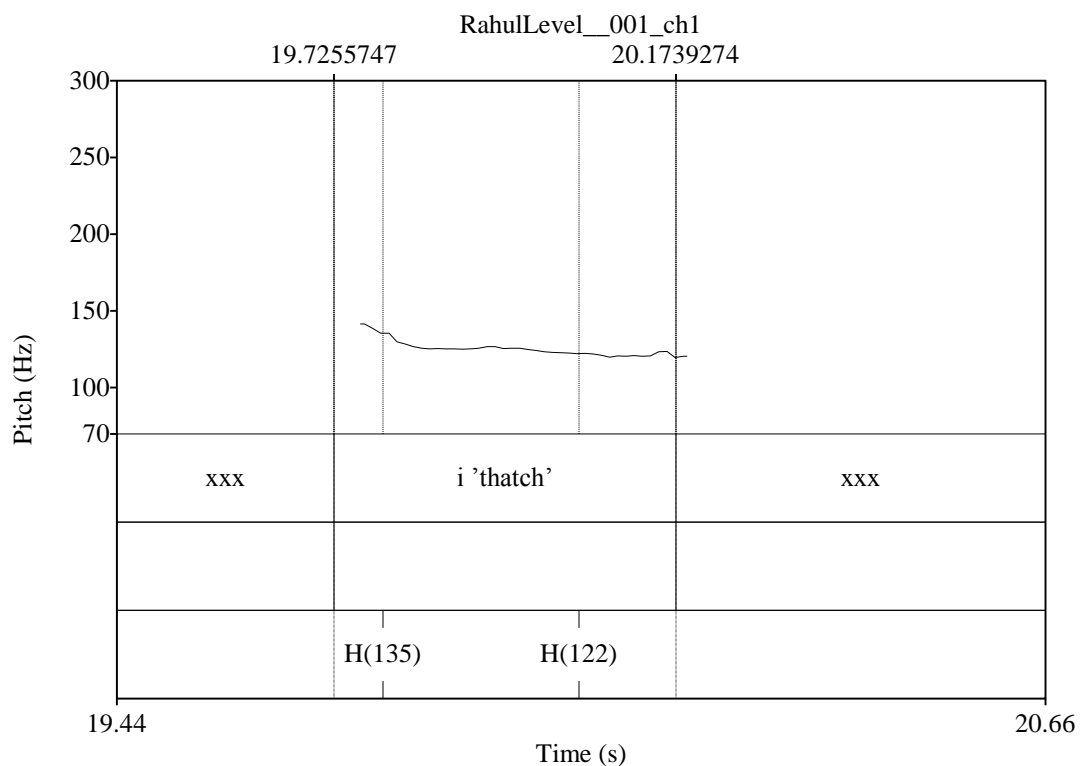


Fig. Pitch contour for the word *i 'thatch'* which has an Initial F0 of 135Hz and Final F0 of 122Hz.

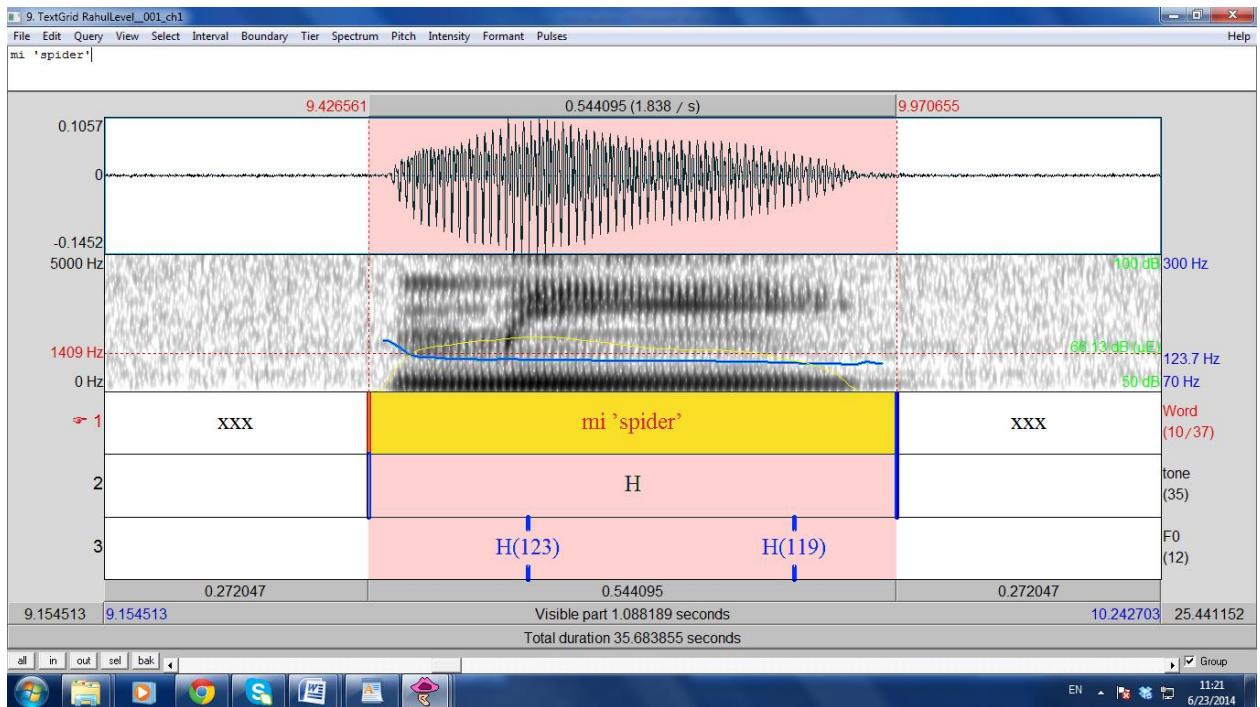


Fig. Spectrogram and Pitch contour for the word *mi 'spider'*.

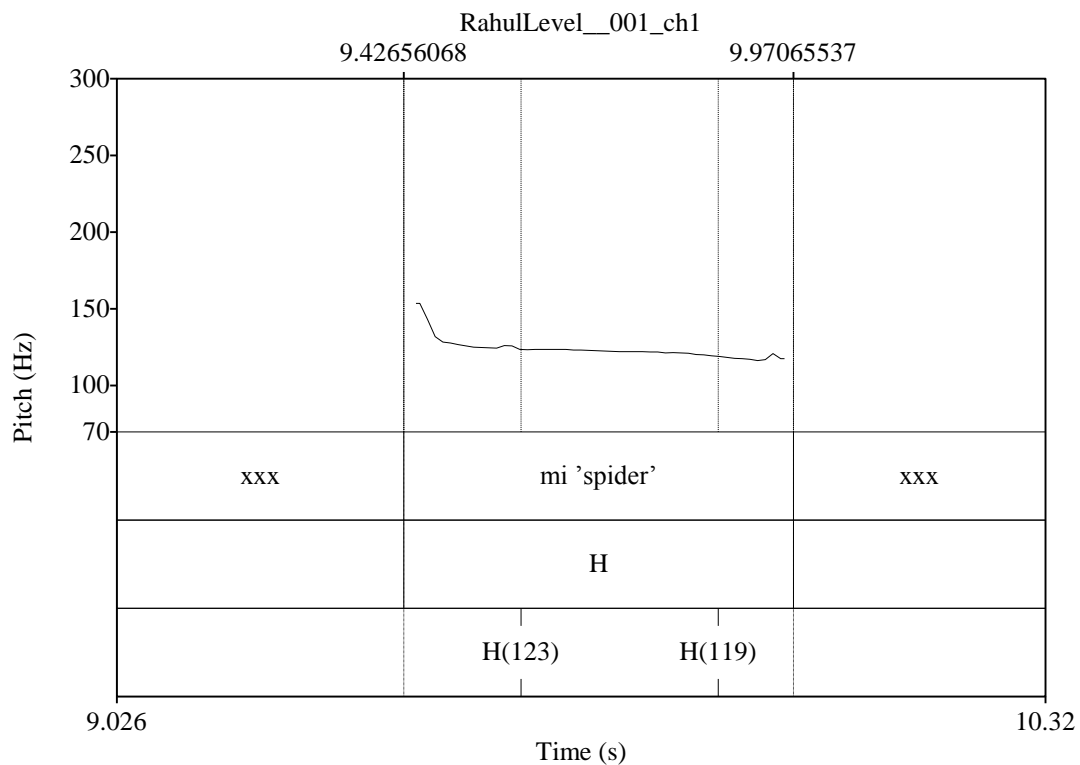


Fig. Pitch contour for the word *mi 'spider'* which has an Initial F0 of 123Hz and Final F0 of 119Hz.

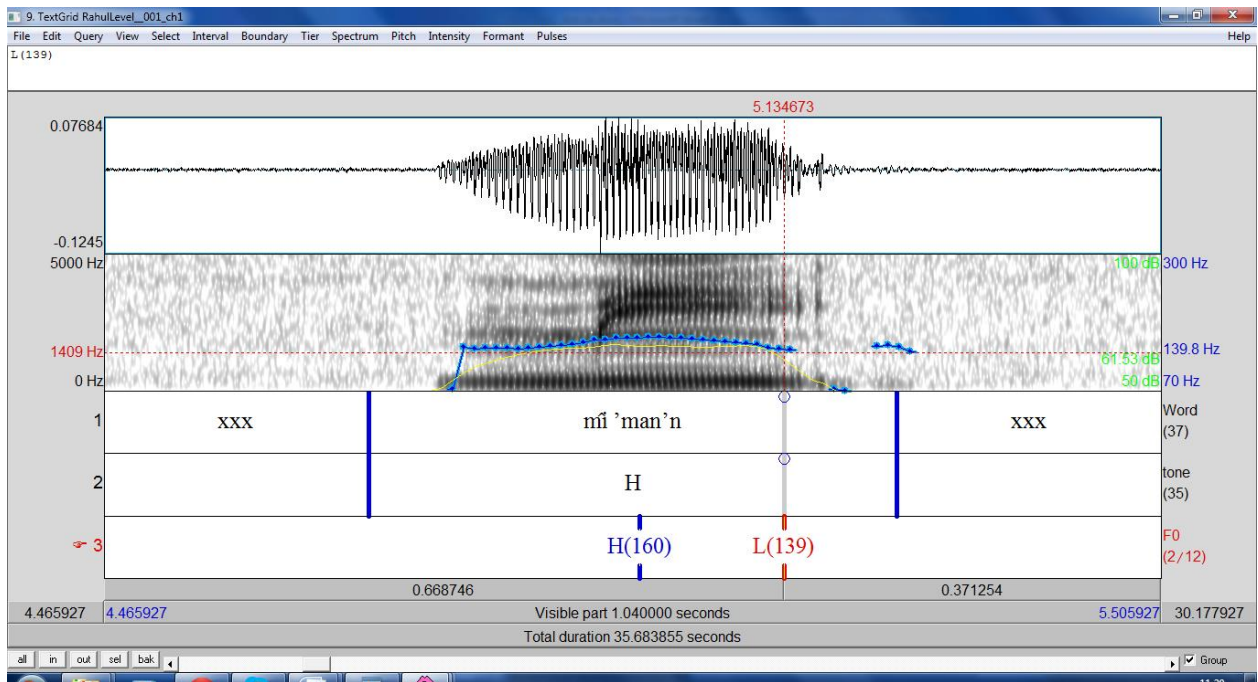


Fig. Spectrogram and Pitch contour for the word *mî 'man'*.

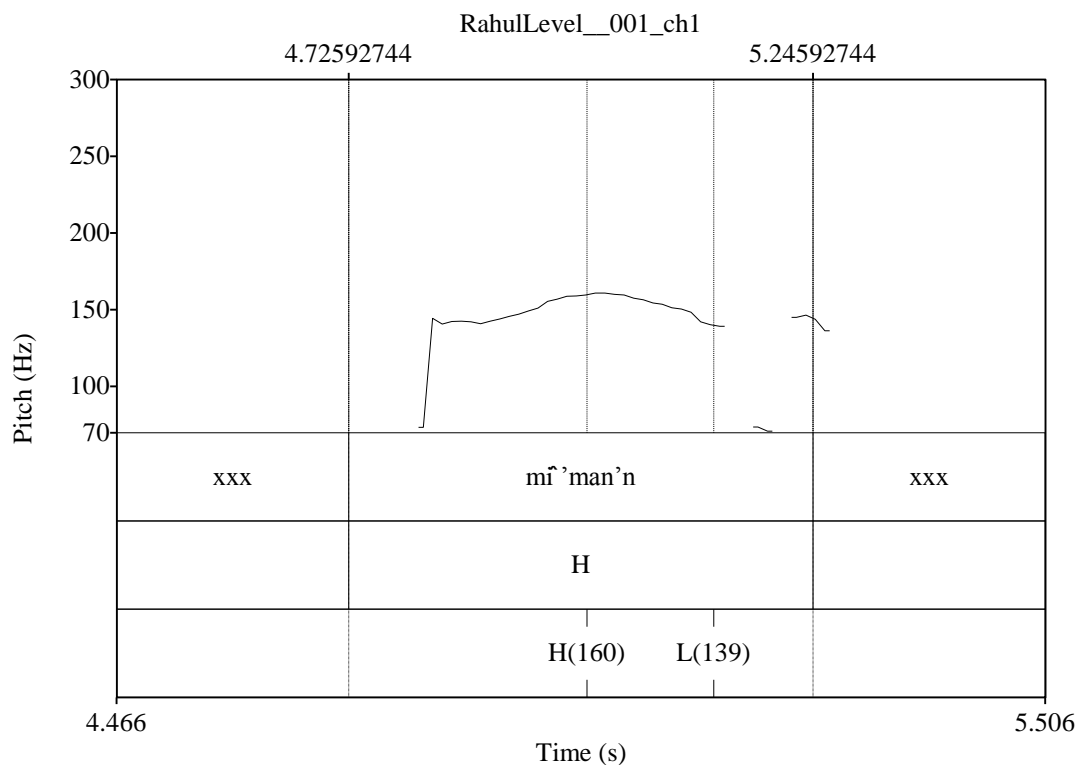


Fig. Pitch contour for the word *mî 'man'* which has an Initial F0 of 160Hz and Final F0 of 139Hz.

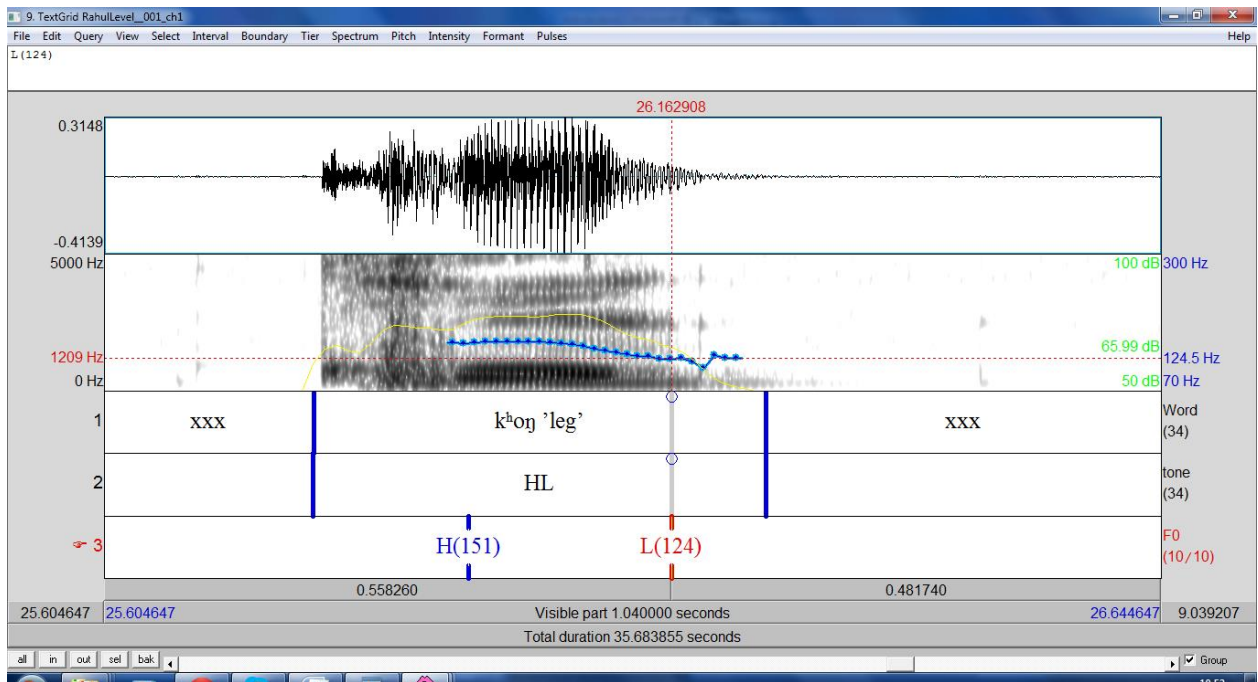


Fig. Spectrogram and Pitch contour for the word *kʰoŋ 'leg'*.

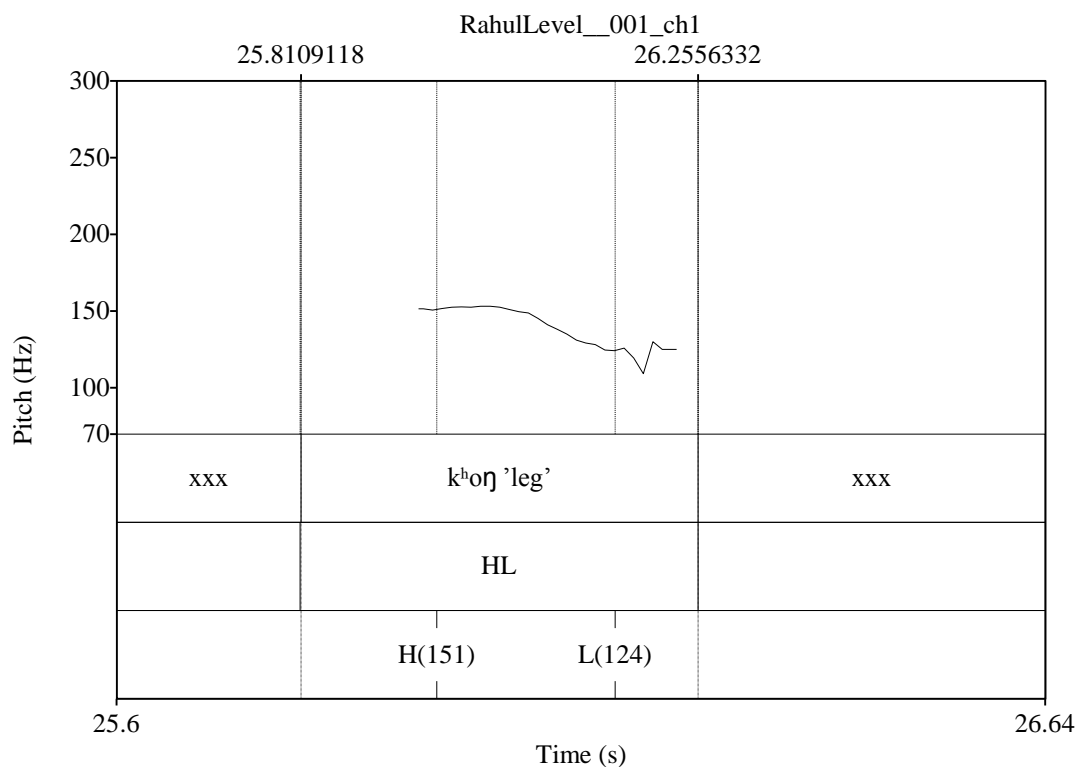


Fig. Pitch contour for the word *kʰoŋ 'leg'* which has an Initial F0 of 151Hz and Final F0 of 124Hz.

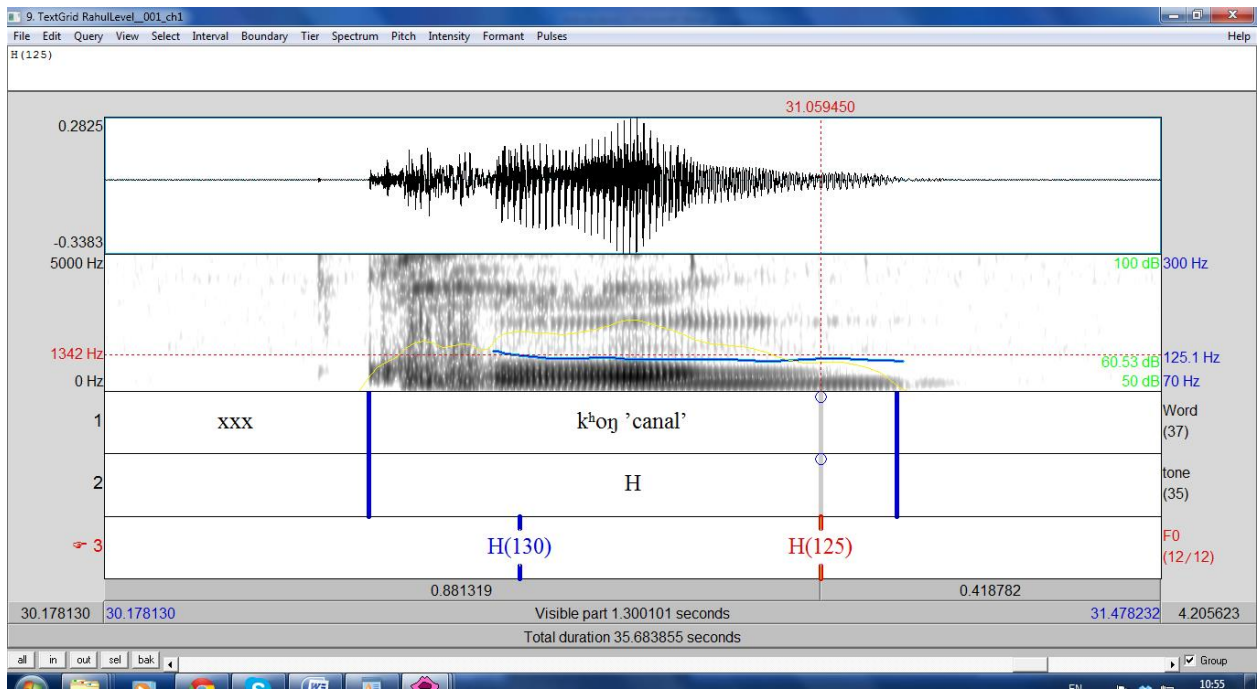


Fig. Spectrogram and Pitch contour for the word *kʰoŋ* 'canal'.

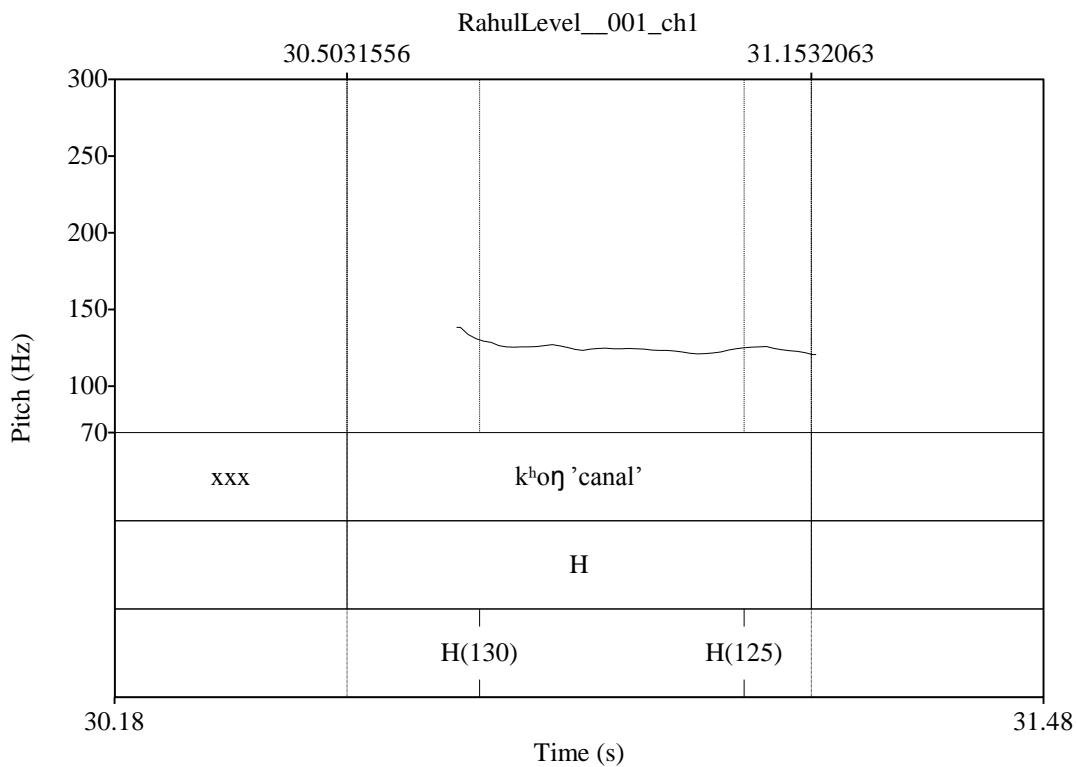


Fig. Pitch contour for the word *kʰoŋ* 'canal' which has an Initial F0 of 130Hz and Final F0 of 125Hz.

In the following table the acoustic measurements of the average fundamental frequency Intensity and duration for some of the data used for the study is shown:

H (Level Tone)							
Word	Meaning(POS)	Avg F0	I F0	F F0	Intensity	Duration	Syl Duration
puŋ	Hour(N)	143.9	146.9	136.6	70.94	0.17	0.29
tin	Saliva(N)	120.2	130.04	115.7	55.87	0.25	0.4
kaŋ	A game(N)	124.4	130.4	124.4	65.24	0.33	0.52
kəj	Tiger (N)	132.3	138.3	127.3	65.81	0.23	0.36
p <sup>h</sup> əm	Bed(N)	125.5	127.9	127.3	63.1	0.24	0.37
t <sup>h</sup> oŋ	Bridge(N)	121.2	124.3	118.6	61.31	0.27	0.45
k <sup>h</sup> oŋ	Bee(N)	136.5	140.7	131.5	67.84	0.22	0.47
məŋ	Crematory(N)	129.8	134.2	127.5	65.64	0.3	0.51
ləm	Fathom(N)	146.9	156.4	131.9	68.7	0.17	0.37
huŋ	Rivet(N)	136.3	143.9	133.4	66.55	0.24	0.51
un	Snow(N)	144.3	150.2	139.2	67.45	0.29	0.43
ləj	Tongue(N)	132.1	137.2	129.2	65.33	0.26	0.42
pi	Tears(N)	133.6	139.5	127.3	73.1	0.11	0.29
pe	Umbrella(kind of big one)(N)	134.5	137	135.5	70.9	0.2	0.32
la	Big round winnow for drying grains(N)	129.3	129.5	128.9	62.09	0.25	0.44
lu	Head(N)	136.1	138.5	134.3	63.6	0.27	0.54
wa	bamboo(N)	143.2	147.4	136.9	65.54	0.1	0.34



In the following table the acoustic measurements of the average fundamental frequency Intensity and duration for some of the data used for the study is shown:

HL Falling Tone							
Word	Meaning(POS)	Avg F0	I F0	F F0	Intensity	Duration	Syl Duration
pûŋ	Drum(N)	145.3	155.1	128.8	71.22	0.16	0.30
tîn	Insect(N)	166.9	178.5	135.4	59.4	0.12	0.20
kâŋ	Mosquito(N)	143.3	155.7	122.8	70.56	0.16	0.28
kêj	Granary(N)	145.6	155.4	132.9	68.31	0.14	0.22
t <sup>h</sup> ôŋ	Door(N)	127.6	142.3	117.2	65.21	0.16	0.33
sîŋ	Firewood(N)	132.8	144.9	115.3	69.42	0.2	0.45
sêm	Hair(N)	147.1	160.8	123.4	68.57	0.17	0.42
k <sup>h</sup> ôj	Navel(N)	147.3	166.7	117	73.36	0.13	0.34
môŋ	Dream(N)	156.7	167.2	133.3	67.28	0.12	0.33
hûj	Dog(N)	160.5	184.7	130.9	70	0.15	0.35
ûn	Skin(N)	173.5	190.9	134	70.38	0.15	0.25
lêj	Flower(N)	131.8	139.5	125.9	66.49	0.22	0.39
mâ	Bedbug(N)	137.3	145.9	123.8	69.53	0.12	0.29
lî	Cane(N)	153.5	162.8	138.5	65.56	0.14	0.32
lâ	Banana leaf(N)	143.6	152.7	132.2	67.1	0.12	0.27
lû	Fishing trap/basket(N)	146.3	154.7	132.7	65.35	0.17	0.40
wâ	Word(N)	139.2	148.9	127.1	64.02	0.08	0.31



## 5. Tones in Stopped Syllables

Meiteilol has only voiceless obstruent at the syllable-final position. The presence of obstruent final or “stopped” (CVT) syllable restricts the number of contrasting tones. In Meiteilol the obstruent-final syllable carries only the HL Falling tone.

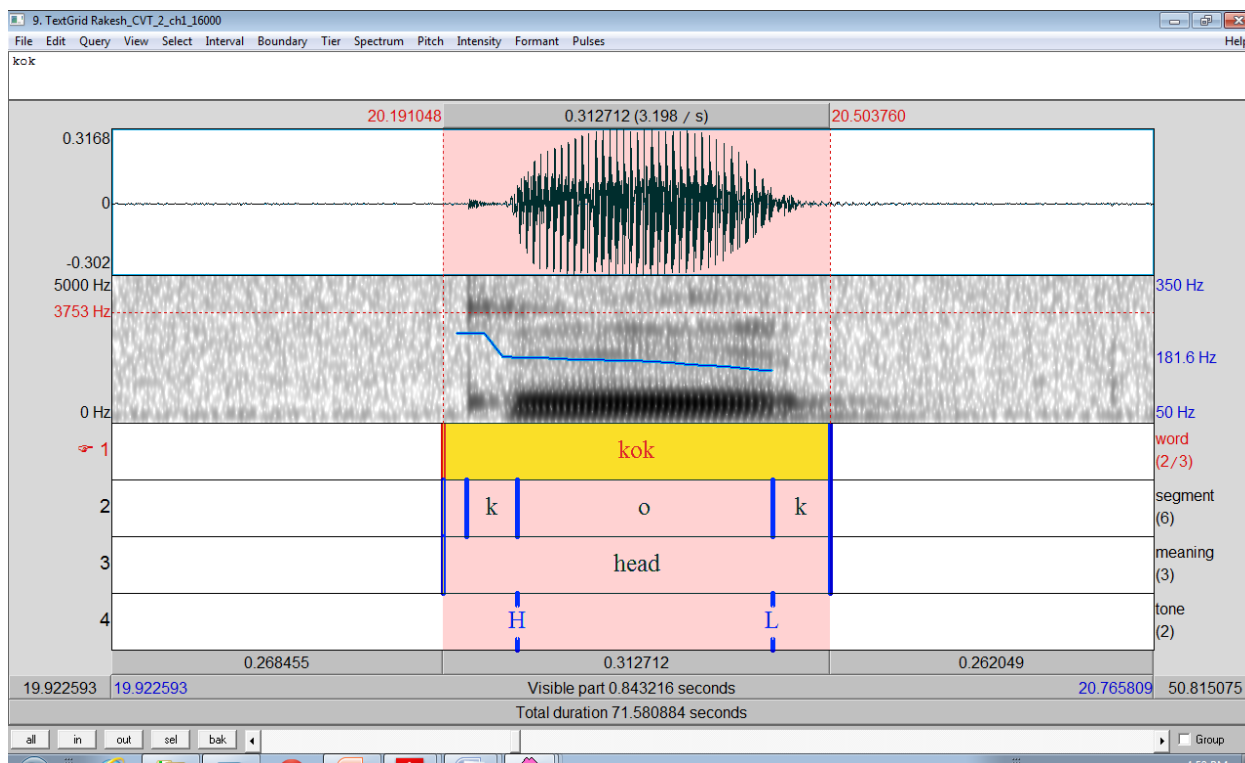


Fig. Spectrogram and Pitch contour for the word kok ‘head’.

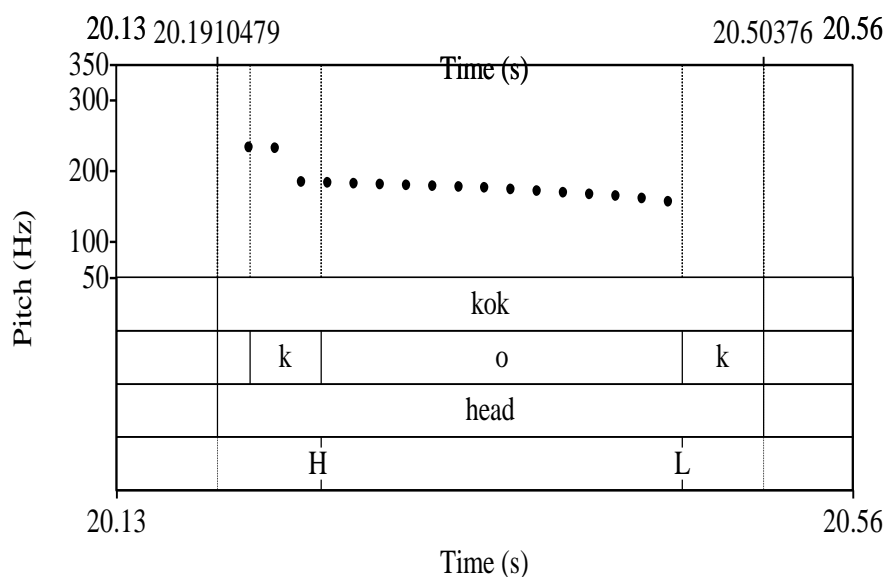


Fig. Pitch contour for the word kôk ‘head’

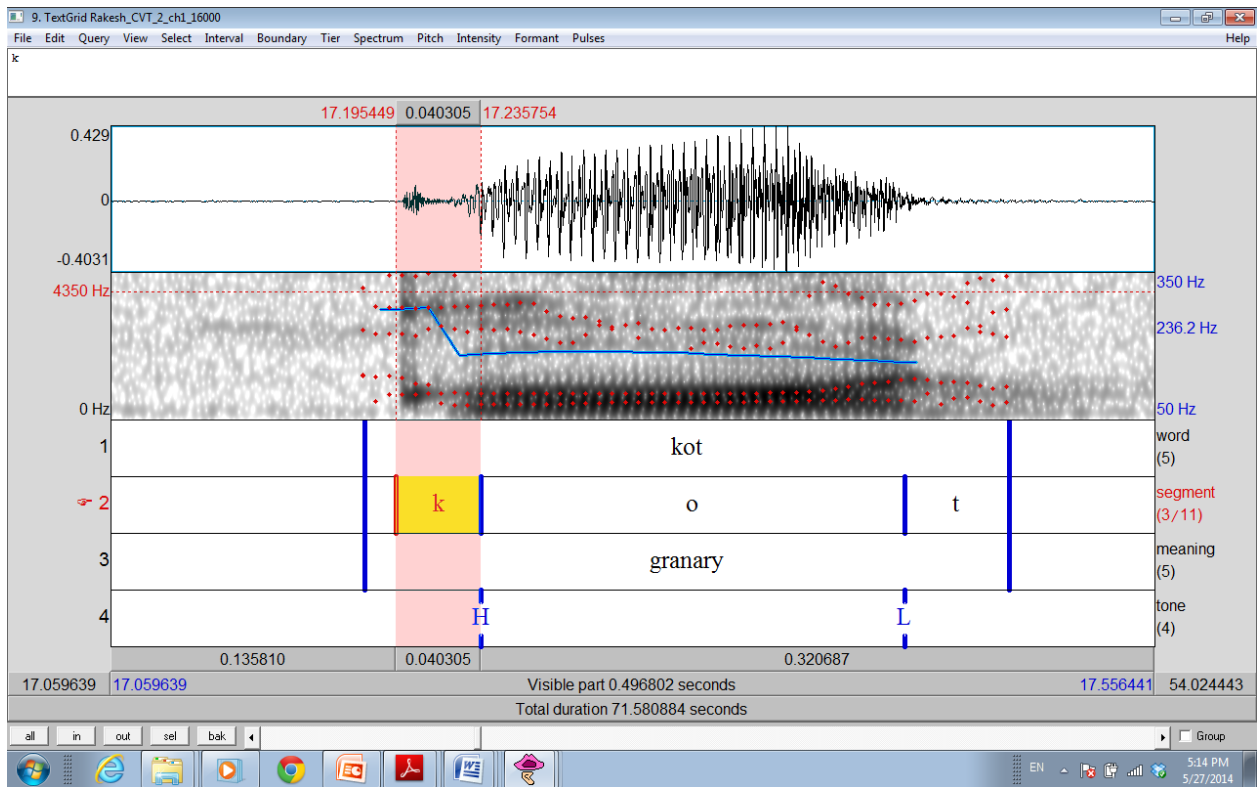


Fig. Spectrogram and Pitch contour for the word *kôt* 'granary'.

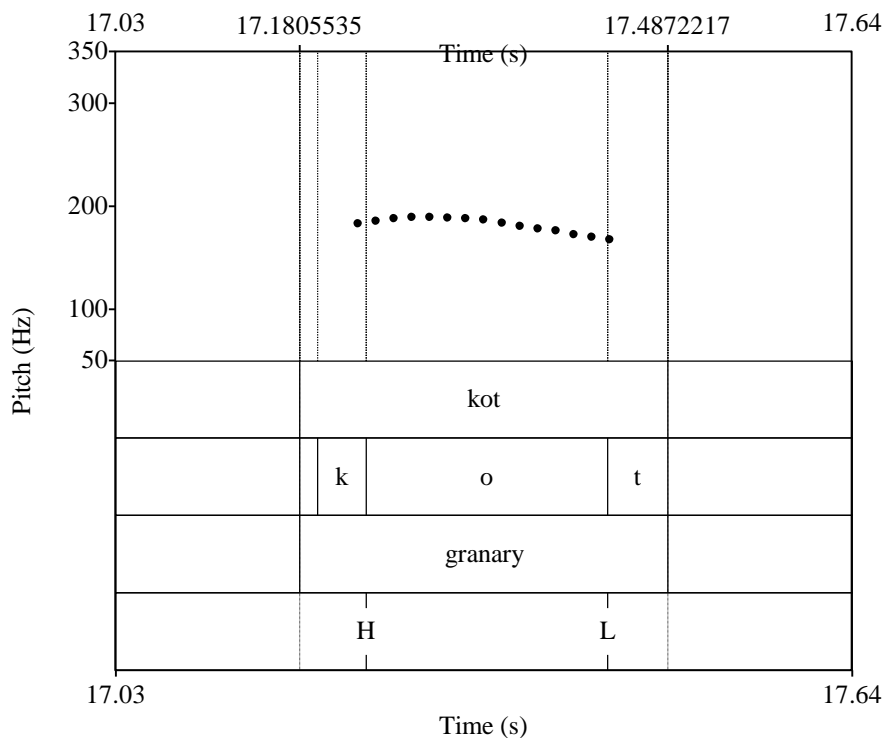


Fig. Pitch contour for the word *kôt* 'granary'

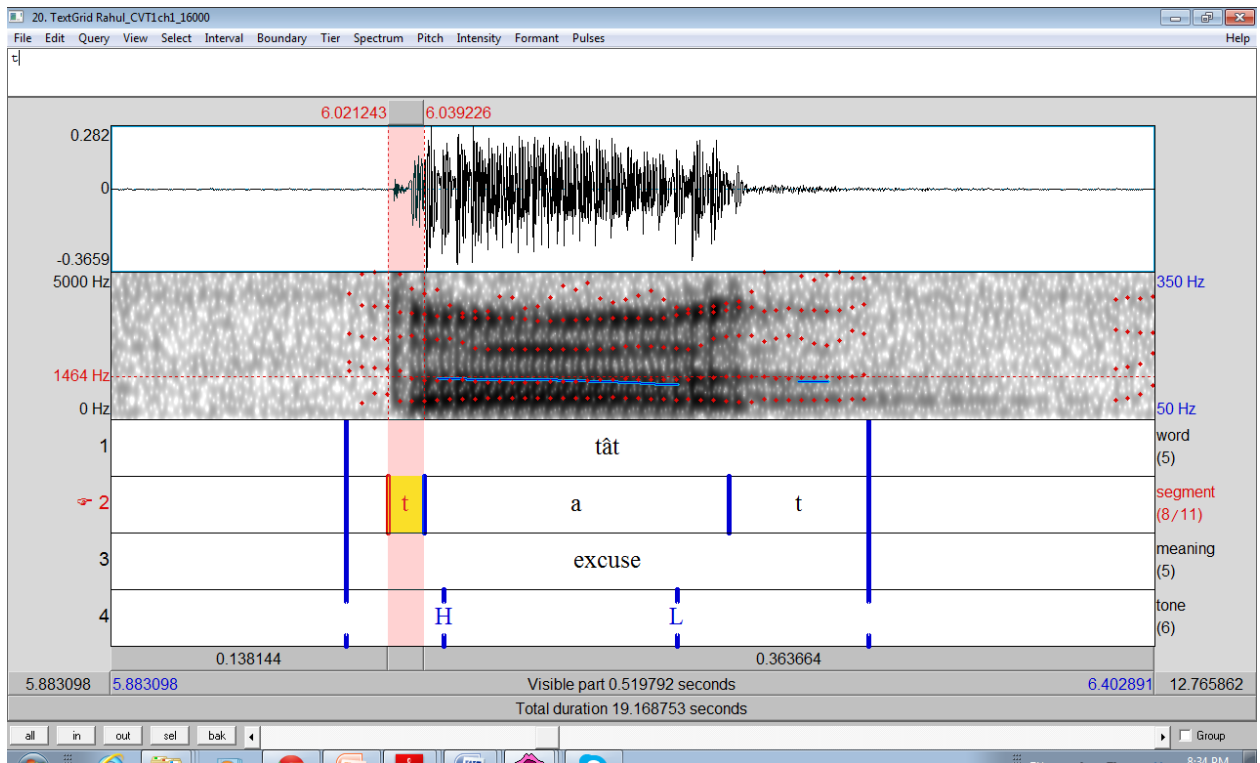


Fig. Spectrogram and Pitch contour for the word tât 'excuse'.

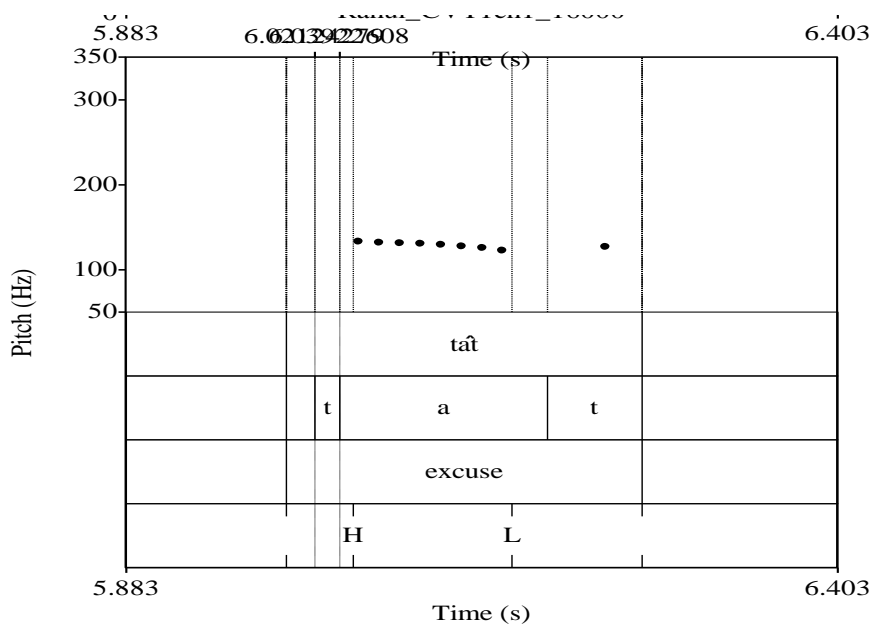


Fig. Pitch contour for the word tât 'excuse'

In the following table the acoustic measurements of the average fundamental frequency Intensity and duration for some of the data used for the study is shown:

HL Contour tone						
Word	Meaning(POS)	Avg F0	I F0	F F0	Intensity	Duration
pât	Lake(N)	126.6	129.2	121.9	68.74	0.07
pôt	Thing(N)	137.2	142.4	132.2	74.9	0.04
pôk	Grey hair(N)	154.9	157.6	149.8	75.4	0.04
cêk	Brick(N)	166	173.4	157.4	73.56	0.09
câk	Rice(cooked)(N)	153.4	158.5	148	69.62	0.09
cûk	Pole(N)	180.7	181.4	178.4	72.69	0.031
kâp	span(N)	151.5	161.5	137.6	72.32	0.09
p <sup>h</sup> êk	Mat(N)	140.4	143.9	137	73.08	0.039
t <sup>h</sup> êk	Caterpillar(N)	139.1	142.4	134	67.77	0.03
t <sup>h</sup> âk	Status(N)	115.1	122	109.5	62.21	0.07
t <sup>h</sup> ôp	Brain(N)	135.8	145.6	120.8	68.55	0.09
k <sup>h</sup> ût	Hand(N)	196.8	202.3	186.6	75.66	0.04
mît	Eye(N)	167.8	171.4	157.1	68.18	0.04
mûk	Ink(N)	164.3	168.8	153.5	66.15	0.05
hîk	Louse(N)	175.5	184.2	161.2	71.45	0.05

## 6. Conclusion

The Tone Bearing Unit in Meiteilol is the Rhyme of the syllable. In Meiteilol the sonorant final syllables or smooth syllables (CVS) bears both the H Level tone and the HL Contour tone while the obstruent-final syllables can bear only the HL Contour tone is presumably because of the syllable weight. The sonorant-final syllables have codas that can contribute to the syllable weight. Considering this fact that the sonorant in the coda position

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Tones in Meiteilol: A Phonetic Description

can be clubbed together with the nucleus and the syllabic rhyme acts as the *Tone Bearing Unit* in Meiteilol. This clubbing together of the nucleus and the sonorant coda is an attested feature which is observed in many Sino-Tibetan languages. The logical argument to second Rhyme as the Tone Bearing Unit is the observation that sonorants do not block the spreading of tone while the obstruents in the coda position especially the stop consonants are known to block the spreading of tone. Meiteilol allows only the voiceless unaspirated stop consonants in the coda position; presumably this is the reason why only sonorant-final syllables have rhyme as the Tone Bearing Unit. While in the case of obstruent-final syllable only the vocalic nucleus is the Tone Bearing Unit. The Meiteilol vowels are monophthongs and do not have length distinctions. The logical reason for the constraint on the realization of tonal contrast at the coda position is because the duration for contrast is limited in the obstruent-final or stopped syllables due to the shortening of vowel nucleus in stopped syllables.

Tone found on stopped syllables is always a sub-set of those found on the smooth syllables.

Meiteilol has two tones:

- i) H Level Tone, and
- ii) HL Contour Tone

Meiteilol sonorant-final syllable (CVS) can have both H Level Tone and HL Contour tone. While in the obstruent-final syllable (stopped syllables) only the HL Contour Tone can occur. This finding is in sync with the coda constraint on tone which states that tone found in obstruent-final syllable is only a sub-set of the tones found in the sonorant-final syllable. The generalization that the complexity of final-syllable is inversely related to the complexity of tonal systems is verifiable from the current study. The relatively complex tonal systems are associated with those languages which have a limited sound inventory at the syllable final position. Whereas languages with a richer sound inventory at the final syllable position have a less complex tone system.

Meiteilol has a rich inventory of consonants that can occur at the word final position. The phonemes that occur at the word final position in Meiteilol are the voiceless stops /**p t k**/ the nasals /**m n ŋ**/ the approximants /**j w l**/ the vowels /**i e a o u**/. The richness of the consonants occurring at the final position of the syllable in Meiteilol is contrary to Tibeto-

Burman tendencies. The finding corroborates with the fact that Meiteilol has a relatively non-complex tonal system and has only two tones a H Level tone and a HL Contour tone in Isolation.

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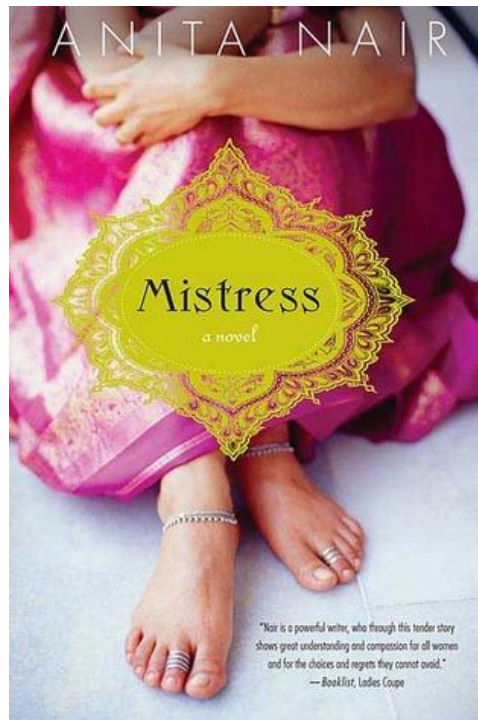
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## Social Criticism in the Novels of Anita Nair

Sanjay Kumar, M A., M Phil. and NET

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Sanjay Kumar, M A., M Phil. and NET

Social Criticism in the Novels of Anita Nair

## **Abstract**

Change is the law of nature. Anita Nair's novels *Ladies Coupe* (2001) and *Mistress* (2005) project women's subjugation and their suppression in contemporary Indian society. It is a matter of great regret that even in this era of the twenty-first century; women are not given the freedom that men enjoy in the male dominated society. The objective of the research paper is to study the feminist literature and to examine the displacement of women through their humiliation. The aim of the research paper is to delineate how the women are no longer in the mood to bear this burden of traditionalism. They are in a mood of revolt against this patriarchal social set up of society. They don't want to follow the trodden path, but know very well how to make their own path. Social, cultural and religious aspects of traditional society are challenged which cause the change in the norms of social institutions. Through these changes, clash between old and new ideologies is clearly noticeable in the research paper.

## **Social Criticism**

Social criticism has been part and parcel of literature. Man as a social being, lives in society; being a part of it, all his activities, directly or indirectly, are related to society. Literature is created by man and cannot exist without society. Society is the environment in which literature breathes. Literary history is divided into different ages because literature of every age has some special characteristics. So, by studying the literature of different ages, some common characteristics of the concerned age can be found and by interpreting those characteristics, a fairly complete picture of the concerned age can be drawn. Literature shows both the good and bad sides of the society, criticizes and appreciates them and this pattern may be termed as social criticism. On this ground, social criticism is the critique of society.

## **Social Relevance of Literature – Concepts and Ideals**

Literature always bears its social relevance. It is a vehicle of presenting the highest ideals and aspirations of mankind. Feminism as a literary theory entered the academic circle in the late 1960's with the advent of Post-structuralism. Patriarchy is the traditional social set up of the male dominated society, in which man enjoys power and freedom, whereas woman is denied such freedom and power. Woman has not been given due importance from ages past. As Simone de Beauvoir remarks: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female



presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine” ( Beauvoir 295).

### **Anita Nair and Her Novels**

Among the emerging writers, Anita Nair is one of the most promising writers. She is the novelist of twenty-first century during which values, traditions and beliefs are changing very speedily. She takes up the cultural, social and economic aspects which mark the mode of contemporary society and provide a perfect example of victimized women in a patriarchal system. Her novels are like social documents.

### ***Ladies Coupe* – A Feminist Novel**

In *Ladies Coupe* (2001) the novelist tries to depict the picture of an Indian woman who stands by the side of her family despite all the tortures they perpetrate upon her. The novel challenges the concept of patriarchy. The story is an attempt to show how, in life, suppression and oppression do not always come in recognizable forms, but often under the guise of love, protection and the assurance of security. Her third novel *Mistress* (2005) displays the picture of contemporary, changing society where the sacred institution, marriage has lost its significance, gone are the days of arranged marriage and the trend of caste exogamy and living-together relationships are coming into being. By portraying these emancipated women, Nair projects a crystal clear picture of contemporary society.

Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupe* is a feminist novel. Akhilandeswari alias Akhila is the protagonist. She is forty five. She, after her father’s death, is appointed as an income tax clerk. Now she bails out her family from economic crisis and plays the role of a daughter, sister, aunt and bread runner. This step of Akhila undermines the traditional psyche of the male dominated society regarding woman. By doing this so, she challenges the domain of the male dominated society.

After some time, Akhila is not allowed to live a life of her own. Generally, it is considered that a woman cannot live alone. She is considered merely a follower of her male counterpart. Her duty is to get married and to be a good wife and mother. So traditionally, a woman, without man, is considered incomplete. But when Akhila wants her mother to take music lessons, just as Karpagam’s mother teaches dance, she disapproves of it saying, “I don’t

approve of what Karpagam's mother is doing" (LC 13). She reminds Akhila what her father has told her when they were first married, "I want my wife to take care of my children and me. I don't want her so caught up with her job that she has no time for the house or for taking care of my needs" (LC 14).

### **Revolt against Patriarchy**

But Akhila thinks differently. After spending the golden period of her life for the good of her family, she is not given her due reward. When she seeks permission from her mother to go to Mysore with an office group, her mother finds herself helpless and asks her to get permission from her brothers, but she being an elder sister, thinks it is not fair to get permission from them and declares her revolt against patriarchy saying, "for heaven's sake, I don't need anyone's consent? Look at me, I'm forty-five years old. And older than all of you. I will do exactly as I please and I don't give a damn about what you or anyone else thinks..." (LC 204).

So after sometime, Akhila, without getting permission, decides to go to Kanyakumari and undermines the myth that "a woman can't live alone. A woman can't cope alone" (LC 16). She is not the woman of traditional society, but she is the image of the new woman. She remains unmarried and does not want to be the follower of this male dominated society. As she remarks, "women are strong. Women can do everything as well as men. Women can do much more. But a woman has to seek that vein of strength in herself. It does not show itself naturally" (LC 209-210).

### **Image of a New Woman**

In this way Akhila is the image of a new woman who sets aside the traditional psyche regarding woman. This new woman is a self-reliant, emancipated and happy individual, sexually uninhibited, intelligent, confident and assertive. She lives with a heightened sense of dignity. This new being has been projected in the context of the contemporary world.

### **Anita Nair's Women Characters - Saadiya**

Anita Nair's women characters rebel against the patriarchal set up in order to explore their own potential or to live on their own terms, regardless of the consequences that such a

rebellion may have on other lives. By portraying her as emancipated woman, Nair projects the crystal clear picture of contemporary society.

In *Mistress* through Saadiya, Nair points to a kind of feminist emancipation that is based upon not limiting women to their traditional roles, but in expanding and awakening them to several other possibilities. Through Radha and Maya, the novelist highlights the problem of disloyalty and portrays how even the sacred institution of marriage has lost its significance. Emotions and feelings are no more significant in the present scenario; so the writer depicts how the social aspects of contemporary society are being challenged.

Saadiya Mehruunnisa is the second most important female character of the novel. She belongs to Muslim community, where women follow the traditional pattern of society. It is expected that she may remain follow and obey the social norms of traditional society and no matter what her own wishes are she must behave as her other sisters. Her father wishes to marry her to a boy of his own community.

### **Birds in a Cage**

But Saadiya is quite the opposite. More about her nature can be understood with the help of the following remark: “But I have heard an occasional comment about how cruel it is to keep birds in a cage. Then I ask the person who made the comment, ‘How different is it from keeping your wife and daughters at home? Isn’t that a cage, too?’ ” (*Mistress* 74) This spirit takes her to another path where she falls in love with a Hindu boy, Sethu, who is an orphan boy and for this boy, she disobeys her father’s wish to marry a Muslim boy. For this she is punished. In spite of the severe punishment, she remains resolute to her decision and goes on crossing one taboo of her community after another. She prefers to go with a man who has no proper education, no proper job and no means to support his family, without a family of his own and most importantly without the right faith. She talks differently, in a language which bears the sense of freedom. As she elaborates “A house with windows that could be flung open and a little terrace on the roof with a wall that stood just waist high. The sky over the house had no boundaries. I felt my heart flower. I wanted to spread to my arms and gather the world to me” (*Mistress* 137).

### **The Trend of Exogamy**

This sense of freedom drives her to Sethu. It highlights that the time of arranged and endogamous marriage has gone. This trend of exogamy – caste exogamy and religion exogamy – points towards a particular aspect of society which marks the mode of contemporary society.

### **Freedom-seeking Youngsters of Twenty-first Century**

Here Saadiya stands for the youngsters of the twenty-first century, who by challenging the cultural and social aspects of society, disobey their parents and follow their self-made path. Presently our society is passing through a crucial phase as never before. She, by crossing the limits of the external laws, tries to find a different path, which may offer her some satisfaction. She wants to spend her life freely unlike other Muslim girls. If we look at this development, the relationship of Saadiya and Sethu, they cross religious boundaries.

Basically Saadiya is a Muslim girl, while Sethu comes from a Hindu community. For them, these religious teachings seem to be not practicable in their lives: “I thought we told each other that we don’t need religion or religious teaching. This has nothing to do with religions” (*Mistress* 194). This development projects cultural change. She takes this step so that she can live the life of her own choosing.

### **Radha, Independent Woman of Contemporary Society – Turning Back to Tradition**

Radha is the protagonist of the novel and is the embodiment of the women of the twenty-first century. She comes from the middle class family. She is well educated and well aware of the world outside. Having a good job and a lover also, she thinks herself to be an independent young woman of contemporary society, who can decide about her own life. Now by leaving her new found life behind, she goes back to her family where she is married to Shyam.

Though she is married to Shyam, yet she develops extra-marital relationship with Chris. But this development puts her into a fix where she cannot differentiate between right and wrong. She remarks: “I do not understand what is happening to me, a married woman, a wife. When I married Shyam, I swore never to flout the rules of custom again. How have I become so disdainful of honour, so contemptuous of convention?” (*Mistress* 54)

### **Feeling the Burden of Institution**

The patriarchal decision pushes her on to the path of traditional society, where Shyam is unable to recognize and understand female sensibility. At the beginning of her marriage, she takes the decision “never to flout the rules of custom again.” (*Mistress* 54) But she still feels the burden of the institution, marriage. It is the path from which she used to dream of escaping, but now she again finds herself in the same trap. This step takes her on to a disaster where she finds herself on a two-edged-sword. First of all, she has to play the traditional role in which she is married to Shyam; on the other hand, she plays the role of an adulterous lover with Chris. Here she seems to feel ambivalent about this development.

### **Conduct and Wish to Pursue Love**

On the one hand, Shyam feels proud of being the husband of a modern woman who knows what she wants to achieve in her life. On the other hand, he does not wish her to follow that rebellious path, so he puts problems on her way of achieving it. Shyam loves her very much, but she looks down upon him and develops extra-marital relations with a foreigner, Chris. Shyam is aware of this attraction; in spite of that, he does not do anything, but watches helplessly when his wife Radha embraces Chris passionately.

### **Shyam and Chris**

Her personal conduct and wish to pursue love compels her to violate the first rule of the society. This pursuance takes her away from the patriarchal set of society and points towards the revolt against traditional society. This dilemma of the protagonist makes the title relevant. Chris embodies the modern and new life, while Shyam stands for traditional life. Radha is the girl of the new generation who wants to avoid the traditional life that is stereotype completely. Shyam also has some expectations from her. “Does she ever consider that such silly acts have repercussions? Besides, what will my friends and their wives say if they find out? We have a place in society, a standing that Radha has always treated rather carelessly”. (*Mistress* 71)

### **Lust and Adultery**

Radha’s lust is not the only thing responsible for her attraction to Chris. Chris is the man who provides her everything such as love, sex care, etc. She is aware of how the world would respond about her adultery. As she admits: “I know, Uncle. Very well, I know the

world would think it is wrong. There is no justification for adultery, I will be told. But I love him. He is a fire in my blood,' I say". (*Mistress* 207) Radha is not a traditional women, but a modern one who is the product of the twenty-first century and has her own emotions and feelings too. Here she does not bother about family disgrace, but knows that she has right to live of her own accord. As she elaborates: "that isn't right. Don't I have a right to an opinion? I am your wife. Your wife, do you hear me? But you treat me as if I am a kept woman, a bloody mistress, to fulfill your sexual needs and with no rights". (*Mistress* 73)

### **Misguided Path to Freedom**

By developing illicit relationship with Chris outside of marriage, Radha violates the social rule. In the novel, "Radha rejects her husband's oppressive environment and she rebels against the false materialism and vulgarity of society. She even virtually rejects her marriage. She distrusts love as a form of male possessiveness and does not want love to be an aspect of male domination". (Naik 21) This affair is an attempt to project her as a misguided modern woman which takes her on a path of freedom, where she is appreciated and allowed to breathe freely unlike her traditional life. This is the second major violation of the rules that is supposed to help her in becoming a modern woman just like the women she reads about, whom she watches on television and others about whom she hears about in her life.

### **Brings in Frustration – Elements of Revolt against Patriarchy**

This violation does not bring her the satisfaction she is looking for. This step takes her towards frustration where she finds herself in a fix and later on, she realizes her fault and feels that "I need time. And I fear that I am not going to have enough. Someone will be hurt, Shyam or Chris. How do I choose? What am I going to do?" (*Mistress* 253) By doing so, she gets the courage to revolt against the social set up of contemporary society. She, due to this, becomes a neglected woman in the eyes of tradition. On the one hand, the novelist portrays how the sacred institution of marriage has lost its significance. By highlighting the fact, the novelist wants to convey a message that gone are the days of loyalty when couples used to remain satisfied within their lives. It projects how the social and cultural aspects are being challenged. This development projects the revolt against patriarchy.

### **Polyandrous Maya**

Maya is not a major character in the novel, but by committing polyandry, she makes herself one of the most controversial characters. Due to this step, she falls in the category of Radha and Saadiya. Radha is shown to be in a fix, where she feels suffocated between two kinds of relationships; her moral responsibility to Shyam and love affair with Chris. Saadiya is torn between her love to Sethu and loyalty to her family. Maya stands between Koman and her husband. She is not a virtuous wife, who, on the side, has an extra-marital affair with Koman. Now she does not feel any problem in adjusting with them. When she goes to Koman she plays the role of a lover very well.

### **Maya - More Complex, Controversial and Different**

This development is not the product of sudden emotions, but of well considered thought. On being proposed to by Koman, she commits bigamy/polyandry. As follows: “Maya, do you want to get married...I asked if you wanted to get married...she started laughing. I would be committing bigamy” (*Mistress* 256). Now she does not feel any kind of guilt. This step reflects her attitude towards this sacred institution. Her decision is purely whimsical. It does not project any logical suggestion at all. This decision makes her more complex, controversial and different to others.

This decision makes her more controversial as compared to Radha and Saadiya. Though she is fully aware that she is committing adultery, yet she goes on crossing the lines. This step does not affect her on any level. However, this decision does not cause problem to anyone whatever it may be her first husband or second husband. But this relationship is beyond justification. This step reflects her attitude towards this sacred institution, marriage. Her decision is purely whimsical. Here Maya stands for a particular aspect of society which points towards changing modes of contemporary society.

### **Women are Projected in Varied Ways**

Through these characters, women are projected in varied ways. They are projected flaunting the norms of traditional society. As Radha develops extra-marital relationship with Chris, Saadiya, by ignoring her father’s wish, prefers exogamy, and Maya commits polyandry with Koman. Thus, these characters point towards a particular aspect of society. When they flaunt rules and follow another path, then they are not under any kind of social, moral and legal pressure. They seem to willingly follow this path. With the help of these characters, the



novelist projects the mode of contemporary society, conveying a message on how the norms of social institutions are being changed. Being part of the new generation, they lean heavily towards cultural changes. Anita Nair's characters rebel against the traditional set up of society in order to explore their own potential, or to live on their own terms. There is a clear tone of resentment, but as human beings with a will of their own, it is a new dimension that the young generation of contemporary society is taking, which indicates rebellion towards the general current of patriarchal society.

### **The Past, the Present and the Future**

The woman in the past was completely traditional, uneducated, superstitious and confined. Having lived in such an atmosphere for ages, women had become narrow-minded, controlling and controlled. They could never think that there could be a different world outside the four walls of their houses, or there could be some more roles for them to play. Women were completely cut off from such a varied and dynamic world. It was so because the men of the traditional society wished to keep them within cage, the enclosure. They too were ruled by the age old philosophy which was thoroughly anti-woman.

### **Psychological Exploration of Feminist Writers**

The feminist writers focus primarily on the psychological exploration of the inner mind of women. These feminist writers penetrate deep into the inner mind of depressed, disillusioned women by virtue of their feminine sensibility and psychological insight. By doing so, they bring to light many of their issues, which are the outcome of the traditionally oppressed woman's psychological and emotional imbalances in a male dominated society. Male dominated society and its anti-woman ideology are the root cause of their backwardness, suffering and victimization.

So the writers raise the issues of contemporary woman like dilution of relationships, pre-marital and extra-marital affairs, and sterility of life, man-woman relationship, their inner fears, oppression and suppression faced by them inside and outside the home. The writers try to depict the picture of contemporary woman who stands by the side of her family, despite of all their torture.



Generally female characters are fixed as gender stereotypes so that their attempts to transcend this position are often questioned. In general, female characters are silenced in the face of their oppression under a strong patriarchal system. It is an undeniable fact that women have not only been denied existence as complete human beings, physically and mentally; not allowed to perform on an equal footing with men, but they are also denied the opportunity to give expression to their feelings and distress.

### **Place of Marriage**

Marriage is a legal relationship between a husband and wife. It is a social necessity where the woman seeks security and man demands respect. It is a socially acknowledged and approved relationship. There are many forms of marriage that are prevalent, such as arranged marriage, love marriage, court marriage, inter-caste marriage, live-in-relationship, and so on. Presently, India is passing through a crucial time of change as never before. If an assessment is made of the last three decades, it can be seen that industrialization, demographic changes, social mobility, modernization, advancement of information technology, globalization, capitalist production, consumerism, extent of urbanization, are factors which mark the standards of social criticism. So boys and girls are coming forward to select or reject their life partners.

### **Marriage in the Novels of Anita Nair**

Marriage in the novels of Anita Nair plays a key role in exposing this trend of contemporary society.

### ***Radha***

Radha in *Mistress* is one of the most important characters who develops a pre-marital affair and plans to get in to a love marriage. But her father comes to know about this development and he finds immediately a husband for her, so that he may avoid further damage to his social status. And she has to bow before her father's decision. But after marriage, she, by developing an extra-marital relationship deliberately with a foreigner, undermines the sanctity of this sacred institution and projects the mood of revolt of the new generation. Though her husband is aware of this development, he keeps watching helplessly. She's supposed to do what he wishes, but she does not pay attention to him at all. When Shyam objects over her misdeeds, she upbraids him in one of their arguments: "Don't I have a

right to an opinion? I am your wife. Your wife, do you hear me? But you treat me as if I am a kept woman, a bloody mistress to fulfill your sexual needs and with no rights". (*Mistress* 73)

### ***Sadiya***

Saadiya in the same novel is the second most important female character. She does not want to be the follower of tradition society. She is a modern girl who knows very well how to make her own path. Her decision to go with the Hindu boy Sethu indicates that the norms of this institution are changing very speedily. Here the novelist wants to convey a message that gone are the days of endogamy and arranged marriage and coming the days of caste exogamy, religion exogamy, love marriage, court marriage, etc. that is totally based on love marriage.

### ***Maya***

Maya in *Mistress* is a married woman who lives a happy life. She does not only develop extra marital relationship with Koman, but commits polyandry also. Angela in *Mistress* is also one of the most important characters who without being married, has a live-in-relationship with Koman. By doing so, Maya and Angela challenge the cultural and social aspects of traditional society. They take these steps deliberately. These forms of marriage warn us that some serious changes are taking place in contemporary society and these changes take our society towards cultural transformation.

### ***Akhila***

Akhila in *Ladies Coupe* is a forty five years old spinster, who takes on the various roles of daughter, sister, aunt and the bread runner. Despite doing so much for others of her family, she is not given her due. Hence, she does not want to follow the trodden path of marriage which is the root cause of oppression and suppression. By doing so she undermines the traditional concept that "a woman can't live alone. A woman can't cope alone" (*LC* 16). She completely undermines the significance of this sacred institution and openly revolts against the patriarchal set up of society. She wants to get rid of the life she had lived so long for others; she desires to live a life of her own, so she takes the decision to get reunited and connected with Hari over the phone. Finally she succeeds in her defiance against patriarchy. In this way, Akhila conveys a message that a woman can have a happy life without being married. It is not a social a necessity, rather it seems a burden.

## Love, Sex and Morality

In this fast changing world, the issue of morality attracts our attention more urgently and readily. Love and sex play a vital role in the novels of Anita Nair. It is love and sexual desire which take Radha (*Mistress*) to adultery. Her husband tries to prevent her from taking this shameful path, but she does not heed him. She, by committing adultery, brings disgrace to her family. Though, later on, she expresses regret over a lot of her doings.

Saadiya (*Mistress*) comes from the Muslim community and it is expected that she may obey the social norms of traditional society. Her father wishes her to marry a boy of his own community. But she opposes the decision of her father who is the embodiment of a patriarchal society. This spirit of the new generation takes her to another path where she falls in love with a Hindu boy, Sethu, who is an orphan and has no proper education and for this she disobeys her father's wish to marry a Muslim boy. In spite of the severe punishment, she remains resolute to her decision and goes on crossing one taboo of her community after another. Her own wishes are more important to her than her fathers'.

This step of Saadiya indicates a particular aspect of society. It warns us how personal wishes compel the young people to move away from their age-old traditions. Love and sex play a major role. Due to this revolt, parents find themselves helpless. Privatization, social mobility, westernization, modernization, advancement of information technology, globalization, etc. play a decisive role in shaping the standards of the twenty-first century. So it is clearly visible that the old traditions are dying out and new trends of contemporary society are emerging. Her new sense of self-awareness empowers her with an understanding of her feminine quality. When she resolves her inner conflicts, she is able to conquer self-identity.

## Changing Focus on Marriage

Love /sex play a vital role in the life of Akhila also. After spending some nights with Hari at Kanyakumari, she, without unfolding her identity, takes a decision to get reunited and connected with Hari over the phone. Here Saadiya and Akhila stand for a particular aspect of society where the "Many young Indians from the urban middle class are beginning to believe

that love and sex are the only things that matter in relationships, particularly marriage” (Trivedi).

### **Impact of Modernity**

Indian society still relies on many conventional norms and values of tradition which the women have to follow the tradition. However, in present times, at least for a number of young people, caste and religion are not as rigid as in earlier centuries. They are losing their ground rapidly because of Modernity and Globalization. The impact of these factors is clearly discernible in the novels of Anita Nair. Being the part of new generation, mostly all her major characters are not away from its influence.

### **Parent-Child Relationship**

Parent-child relationship plays an important role in the novels of Anita Nair. Anita Nair employs certain characters like Akhila’s mother who expresses how women are strong conservatives, because of the patriarchal structure that has framed strict social, political and economic limitations on them. Akhila’s mother is a highly conservative woman. She is a devoted wife with her own theory who considers herself inferior to her husband. She is a sort of woman who never takes decisions on her own, but leaves all decisions to her husband for she believes, “He knows best”. (LC14) According to her, “A good wife learnt to put her husband’s interests before anyone else’s, even her father’s. A good wife listened to her husband and did as she said...it is best to accept that the wife is inferior to the husband”. (LC 14) This supposedly leads to a harmonious life. This marks the absolute mode of traditional society. So, Akhila’s mother wants that her daughter should imbibe such values so that she may live a happy life in the future.

But Akhila is a modern girl who knows very well how to follow her own path. She is not given much attention regarding her marriage. Due to this, she decides to leave her family and live alone, her siblings do not approve that. So she gets furious and wants to be nobody’s daughter, nobody’s sister, Nobody’s aunt, Nobody’s mother, nobody’s well - wisher and nobody’s family member.

Second most important character is Haji Najib (*Mistress*) who is the father of Saadiya. He wants to arrange a marriage for his daughter in his own community, so that he can avoid public disgrace. He, by nature, is highly conservative. But Saadiya is quite the opposite; she

bluntly denies “Vaapa, I do not wish to marry Akbar Shah’s second son’ ...I am not willing to marry the man you have chosen for me”. (*Mistress* 144)

When Radha falls in love with a boy in city and wants to get married to him, her father comes to know about this development; he arranges her marriage with Shyam, so that he may avoid public disgrace. Here the clash between love marriage and arranged marriage is clearly noticeable. Here Radha is not asked about her choice.

These developments project the clash between two ideologies. Parents want to push their daughters on to the traditional path while the girls do not want to follow the trodden path. In this way, parent-child and child-parent relationships portray the clash between two ideologies – the ideology of the old generation as opposed to the ideology of new generation.

“Today, India is at the first stage of a major social revolution. This was catalysed by the explosive economic changes of the past few decades that accelerated the slow cultural change that was already in the making. Now our country is entering uncharted territory. Arranged marriages are shattering, divorce rates soaring and new paradigms of sex and relationship – queer, open, and live in – are being tested and explored. New values are feverishly in the making, and we live in a state of molten confusion” (Trivedi)

Akhila (*Ladies Coupe*) is a bank employee. She does her duty very efficiently. She is little suffering there. By doing so, she plays the role of a bread runner. She spends all of her salary on her family. She is the only single character in the novels of Nair, who remains unmarried and sacrifices the golden phase of life for the welfare of the family. For this contribution, she is given nothing. Thus, with the help of the above mentioned characters, a complete picture of contemporary changing society can be drawn.

## **To Conclude**

Thus the social, moral and religious aspects of changing society have been studied. The characters challenge the traditional way of life. Parents-child and child-parents relationships, norms of the social marriage, awareness regarding love and sex and so on, are

changing. In this manner, Anita Nair has been successful in highlighting the trend of contemporary changing society that is the basis of social criticism.

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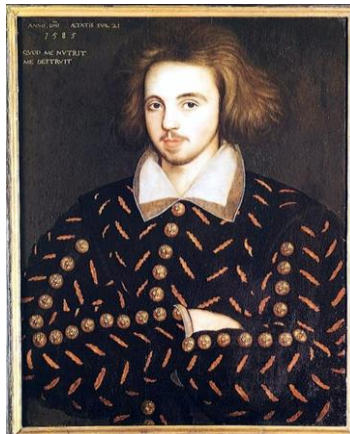
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## Dr. Faustus – A Sermon against Atheism

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Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)

Courtesy: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher\\_Marlowe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Marlowe)

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Dr. Faustus – A Sermon against Atheism

## **Abstract**

*The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus*, commonly referred to as *Dr. Faustus* is a play based upon the vicissitudes of life of a scholar from Wittenberg, Germany who sells his soul to the devil for power, knowledge, and sensual pleasures. Dr. Faustus is a rebellious character who shuns all the established conventions of his time and chooses to live a life of absolute voluptuousness and blasphemy. We can perceive Marlowe's gifted writing talent, which he has used in creating a gigantic character of Dr. Faustus. Bold and audacious, rebellious and adventurer at a time, Dr. Faustus is incomparable in the whole bulk of English Literature in his appearance, gesture, and genius. He makes a 24 years agreement with the devil to enjoy limitless power and infinite liberty to fulfill his satanic wishes without a prick of consciousness. Marlowe has presented him as a person who is afire with burning passions to achieve all unachievable. Absolutely unaware of the realities that he is inviting to catastrophe and absolute catastrophe to him and nothing else, he indulges himself in a life of sensual pleasures.

This paper deals with the purpose for which the play might have been written. An analysis of the character of Dr. Faustus and the consequences of his actions are discussed.

## **The Renaissance Age**

In *Dr. Faustus*, Marlowe has projected a true spirit of the Renaissance era and it is also unignorable that Marlowe himself was a complete package of that time – Renaissance.

According to the dictionary definition, the word *Renaissance* means in general any rebirth or reawakening. "The term is specifically applied to the widespread cultural revival, which marks the division between the so-called 'Dark Ages' and the modern world. In fact, it began in the fourteenth century in Italy and this new wave gradually started spreading over Western Europe and England in the following two centuries ... The main ingredients of this new spirit were individualism and worldliness; and these two traits found manifestation in many forms such as its great yearning for knowledge and learning without fetters, its love of beauty



and hankering after sensual pleasures of life, its brave spirit of adventure and its sky-high ambition and supreme lust for power and pelf in this world” (Famous Publications, 2008)

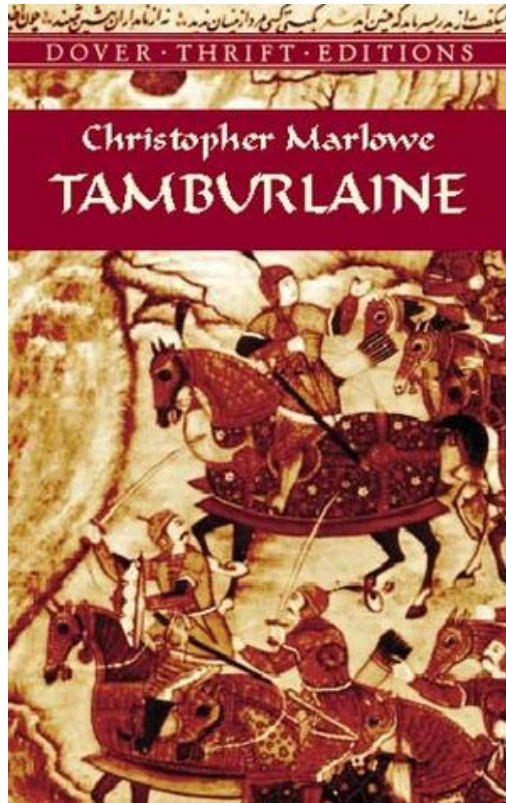
### **Marlowe’s Life (1564-1593) at a Glance**

Marlowe was born in Canterbury, England less than three months before the birth of Shakespeare. He went to King’s School and then joined a college in Cambridge, where he received heterodox views on religion. After college, he joined some kind of secret service agency as an agent and traveled abroad also in this capacity. In 1586, he settled in London and soon joined the Lord Admiral’s Company of players. It seems quite possible that his career as a dramatist must have begun soon after his career as an actor. On May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1593, he was stabbed in an inn by a shady secret-service agent. Thus, sadly his career as a dramatist suddenly ended due to his death at the age of twenty-nine years and three months (Princiss, 1993).

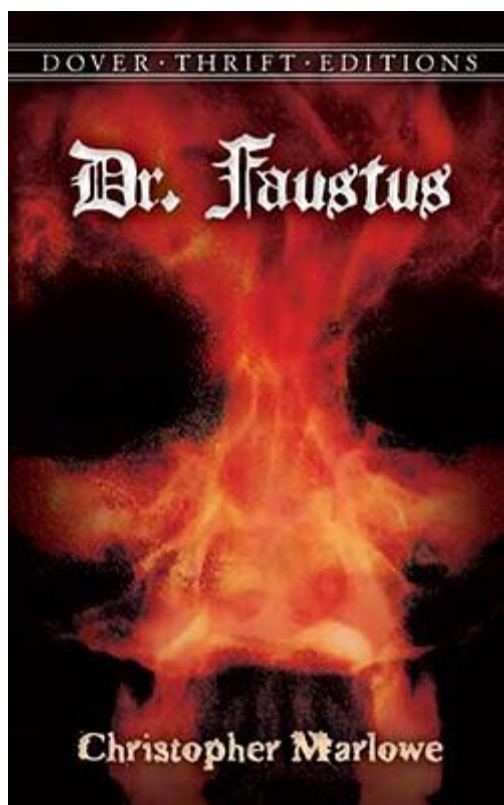
Though Marlowe lived for just 29 years, even in this limited period of life, he lived a life to its fullest with all its pleasures by all means. His only six but splendid plays are enough to make him immortal in the world of literature. He established blank verse as a creative form of dramatic expression. He is the predecessor of Shakespeare, thus he is credited to pave the way for Shakespearean drama in the Elizabethan age. Critics are unanimous in saying,

“If Marlowe had never written or lived, Shakespeare would not have been the same Shakespeare” (Famous Publications, 2008).

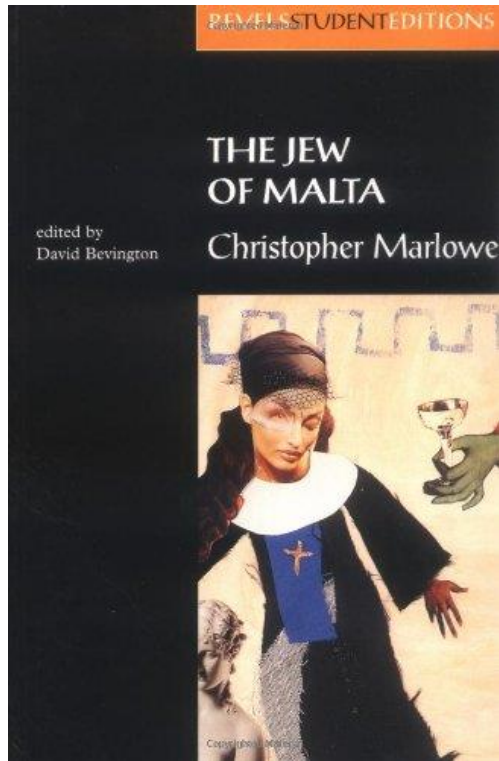
### **Influence of Renaissance on Marlowe’s Characters**



Uncountable wealth, infinite knowledge, and limitless freedom to do anything fair and unfair had been the most favorite possessions not only of Marlowe’s all mighty heroes but also of Marlowe himself. An insatiable lust of wealth and power didn’t let his protagonists stay on the right path and they were determined to destroy every moral convention coming in their ways. His play “**Tamburlaine**” tells the story of a Scythian shepherd who dreams of the world conquest and achieves his aspirations magnificently. This is the story of an invincible human will, which ends with grim tragedy.



“**Dr. Faustus**” is as lustful and insatiable as Tamburlaine, who sells his soul to devil in his eagerness for the acquisition of universal knowledge. Faustus meets his tragic downfall due to his fate written by himself. “**The Jew of Malta**” due to his avaricious dreams of wealth invites his catastrophic end to him. These characters ‘Machiavellian’ in nature are unscrupulous, cruel in power, and are destined to go astray due to their deeds. “In all these illustrated Marlowe’s individualistic conception of tragedy, the classical Greek conception modified by the Renaissance spirit, the conception which portrays the struggle between the overweening soul, typically Renaissance in its insatiable ambition, and the limitations which it seeks to overcome (P 2).



### **The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus**

The play starts with a scene where we find Faustus sitting in his study room and pondering over all worldly subjects; he wants to study now. After receiving his doctorate in Theology, he is still unsatisfied with his level of knowledge. He finds himself in a fix in deciding as what to study now. He thinks of law, medicine, science, and so on, but disregards all in a derogatory way. After rejecting all, he thinks of necromancy to study in order to gain limitless power and knowledge. The idea of black magic excites him as Faustus says,

“A sound magician is a mighty God” (Act 1, Scene 1)

### **A Deal with the Devil**

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In the moment of excitement, he makes a deal with the devil by offering his soul after twenty-four years and during this period; he is granted the opportunity to enjoy all worldly and sensual pleasures.

“O what a world of profit and delight,  
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,  
Is promised to the studious artisan!  
All things that move between the quiet poles  
Shall be at my command: (Act 1, Scene 1)

### **Real-Life Clever Creation**

The character of Faustus is a real-life clever creation of Marlowe and the play of Dr. Faustus has so much to offer to the reader even after four centuries. It provokes us, stills us, stirs us and startles us. Critics have been compelled to think about Marlowe’s objectives in portraying such destructive-natured characters who presents themselves as iconoclast. Faustus also throws the gauntlet to the established creeds of his time and the very destruction brings his final damnation. His desire to get all undesirable makes us his life agonized and miserable this much that in the last few moments he begs mercy, but all in vain. His efforts to save himself from devil prove abortive.

### **Dr. Faustus – A Tragedy of Man’s Aspirations**

Dr. Faustus is Marlowe’s on man show and is dominated by overwhelmed passion of a chief character of Faustus. The play raised the questions of man’s aspirations and limitations in this universe. Marlowe gives full freedom to his protagonists to go to an extreme to fulfill their

wishes. His protagonists' achievements fascinate the readers and put his heroes in an ecstasy. Faustus experiences the same ecstasy; he forgot all about the deadline of his agreement. The back and forth visits of good and bad angels imply clearly that God grants the opportunity to repent to everyone, but it depends upon man whether he avails it or ignores it. Faustus also ignores this chance of redemption; thus is himself accountable for his downfall. His lust and avarice don't let him avail the chances of repentance.

According to an eminent critic, "Marlowe himself was saturated with the spirit of the Renaissance and so he enlivened his heroes with all its robust and fascinating characters so much so that his titanic heroes became the true embodiments of the Renaissance dreams and ideals. This is revealed in Tamburlaine's pursuit of military and political power, in Jew of Malta's aspiration toward wealth as an ultimate end in the most powerful and captivating way, and in Faustus's supreme quest for the ultimate power through knowledge throwing overboard all the moral and ethical principles" (Osborne, P 267).

### **Dr. Faustus – Internal and Tragic Conflict**

Marlowe's contribution to English and/or Elizabethan drama is great and manifold. He is at his best to show the inner conflict of the character of Faustus who struggles to survive in the final moments of his life. An introduction of this internal or spiritual conflict in the mind of his proud and ambitious hero in Dr. Faustus is his greatest achievement.

Nicoll has rightly observed:

"In Dr. Faustus, Marlowe attempted something new – the delineation of struggle within the mind of the chief figure. This struggle is certainly somewhat primitive in its expression but it is a

foretaste of those ‘inward characters’ towards which dramas in its development inevitably tends. Faustus in this respect is unquestionably the greatest tragic figure in sixteenth century literature outside the work of Shakespeare” (P 65).

### **Discarding of Ethical Values**

Dr. Faustus is a rigid incarnation of the bold and audacious spirits of Renaissance. As deeply fascinated by the attractions of his age, Marlowe portrays the character of Faustus, who reveals an indomitable longing for power and pelf, a craving for materialistic and sensual pleasures of life, and an extreme revolt against conventional and religious doctrines of Christian theology. Herein is hidden his eternal damnation as he gives free reins to his aspirations and ignores his limitations as a man in this universe. A sense of atheism and skepticism can be felt in the character of Faustus as he talks of divinity in disparaging terms. He asserts,

“Divinity is the basest of the three”

### **Erudition and Scholarship – of No Avail**

Regardless of all his erudition and scholarship, Dr. Faustus does not choose his path wisely and his abnormal pride and presumption present him as a person who boldly asserts his individualism and raises the standards of revolt against the medieval restrictions on the mind of man. His aspiration to venture into unknown depths of knowledge finally leads to him to discard God and disobey all the Christian creeds.

“Divinity adieu!

These metaphysics of magicians

And necromantic books are heavenly.” (Act 1, Scene 1)

### **Final Moments of Faustus**

Dr. Faustus is a heart-rending story of a meteoric rise and fall of a crestfallen protagonist by a mighty pen of Christopher Marlowe. By selling his soul to the devil he lives a blasphemous life full of sensual pleasures for twenty-four years. Of course, there is an inner struggle and Faustus is at war with his conscious as good and evil angels visit him and his destiny wants to give him a chance to survive but worldly pleasures allure him so much that he surrenders himself out and out to the charms of that life. And what happens to this great agnostic and egotist of his time who wants to unravel all the mysteries of the universe. By the time of the final hour, Faustus has realized that his sins are unpardonable and he has no way to escape. Before the devil snatches away his soul to the burning hell and deprives him of his life, the pangs of an agonized soul find an expression in the final soliloquy of Faustus:

“My God, my God, look not so fierce to me!

Alders and serpents, let me breathe a while!

Ugly hell, gape not: come not Lucifer:

I'll burn my books: Ah, Mephistophilis”. (Act 5, Scene 3)

Critics believed that Marlowe has projected himself in his towering heroes to give vent to his feelings. Deep and profound is the effect of Renaissance on Marlowe and he is everywhere in his for great tragedies, Tamburlaine, Dr. Faustus, Jew of Malta, and Edward 11. What his protagonist strive to achieve, these were his dreams also. On the surface level, Dr. Faustus is play of audacious adventures, rebellious desires, and passionate actions and Faustus is a protagonist

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who prefers to indulge him in the voluptuousness of life by ignoring impending catastrophe. But on the deeper level, it is a play that reminds human beings their limitations in this universe.

Marlowe delivers this message through the mournful monody of the chorus.

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,

And burned is Apollo's laurel-bough

That sometime grew within this learned man.

Faustus is gone regard his hellish fall,

Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise,

Only to wonder at unlawful things,

Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits

To practice more than heavenly power permits. (Act 5, Scene 3)

### **A Sermon against Atheism**

Notwithstanding a bohemian and boisterous life, the miserable plights of all of his protagonists and particularly Faustus' frantic appeals of salvation from Christ at the time of his approaching death seem to overshadow these doubts that Marlowe was an atheist at heart.

Marlowe presents his heroes hankering after worldly pleasures; he does not hesitate in showing their downfall and decay on the worst level.

### **Is Marlowe an Atheist?**

As a matter of fact, Dr. Faustus is a sermon against atheism delivered by a confirmed atheist Christopher Marlowe who does not show the victory of his evil protagonist in the race of life. The greatest irony of the play lies in the fact that Marlowe, who was a true product of Renaissance, shows the victory of virtue in the race of good and evil. It seems that despite having the label of atheist, Marlowe must have known that turning away from God and godly things is catastrophic and leads human beings to the way of doom and damnation. The end of the play reveals the influence of Reformation on Marlowe. It seems in spite of his all great achievements, Marlowe, like Faustus, ultimately realized that nothing could help to save the soul of an agonized person who has lost the time to repent and to surrender the soul to devil is the ultimate destiny as it was cut off from the rich natural resources of belief and faith.

Osborne has rightly said:

“The descriptions of Faustus’s repentance, despair, and mental anguish are among the most vivid and poignant parts of the play. It is, of course, possible to suppose that Marlowe has passed through a stage of youthful skepticism in religion and with a sounder and deeper faith he had come to the knowledge of repentance. Nor indeed is he ever the pure scoffer. It is certain that that author of ‘Faustus’ must himself have walked some way along the path of religious doubts and must have known the sufferings attendant upon that journey” (P 198).

That’s why without a least hesitation, Marlowe presents a grim tragedy replete with poignancy and shows a premature downfall of his great scholar with great realism.

In this scenario, Hudson has rightly said.

“No finer sermon than Marlow’s Faustus ever came from the pulpit”

Faustus is gone, regard his hellish fall.

What a deterioration of a great scholar of Wittenberg presented by a confirmed atheist –  
Christopher Marlowe.

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## The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) at the Higher Secondary Levels in Bangladesh: Problems and Prospects from Teachers' Perspective

Shaila Ahmed

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### Abstract

With the realization of increased needs of English language in Bangladesh in the backdrop of globalization, emphasis has been placed on effective learning of this language. Hence, as practiced globally, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in Bangladesh in 1998-1999 with a view to enhancing the quality of learning among the students of different levels.

This study looks into CLT as a method and its application at the mainstream higher secondary level of institutions in Bangladesh. The study investigates into factors that have made

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adoption of CLT in Bangladesh not quite successful. The study has been done based on interview and surveys of a total of 40 teachers from 20 higher secondary colleges in and out of the capital city of Bangladesh. Based on the results of the survey and interview, this study concludes that despite positive attitudes towards CLT, multiples challenges are faced in this field. It also concludes that the solution of the problems with the collective endeavors both government and private, can bring positive changes in the learning and teaching of English language in Bangladesh.

## **Introduction**

Considering the fact that methods play crucial roles in successful language teaching, various methods are used for optimal rate of success in language learning. In Bangladesh after a great of deal popularity of Grammar-Translation method (GTL), its shortcomings were gradually recognized, especially when students' performance in the practical fields were not found up to the mark. By and large, the relatively poor performance being attributed to the focus on process-based learning under GTL, emphasis was shifted to a function-based method with the aim that students' communication ability will be greatly improved through adoption of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). However, the application of CLT in Bangladesh has not yet produced impressive results because of various intervening factors despite the initial optimism.

## **Objective**

The current study aims at finding out the impediments in the successful learning and teaching of English Language under the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach at the higher secondary levels in Bangladesh.

## **Literature Review**

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Introduced in Europe in early 1970s, CLT rapidly began to influence the English teaching methodology across the world. Ever since its introduction, it has been viewed as one of the most effective methods in ELT.

Despite the fact that there is hardly any universally authoritative paradigm of CLT (McGrarty, 1984), it is an approach of language teaching the goal of which is to generate the learners' communicative competence (Richards and Rodgers (2001). Hymes (1971) referred to the communicative competence emphasizing the importance of social context in communication involving negotiation of meaning between speaker and listener, and author and reader.

Communicative competence considers the contents of communication, the manner of its appropriate production depending on factors like participants, their roles and intentions and on the situations.

According to Howatt (1984), CLT has two versions. One is “Weak” and the other is “Strong” version. The weak version of CLT emphasizes on the particular notions such as “certainty”, “possibility”, “politeness” and functions of language such as “Giving order”, “Asking assistance”. Howatt(1984) considers this weak method as “Learning to use English”. Ellis (2003) holds that the weak version of CLT is mainly grounded on the concepts that the elements of communicative competence are identifiable and can be systematically taught. Hence, it can be deduced that the weak version of CLT is an interventionist approach to language teaching and thus there is a little difference between this approach and the traditional approach.

The concepts of strong version, on the other hand is grounded on the assumption that “language is acquired through communication” (Howatt, 1984). Under this method, learners do not focus on the structural components of language and as such do not go through any process of learning before communication. Rather, the emphasis, in the strong version is placed on the communication first with the assumption that learners, while communicating on wide ranging practical situations, can learn the underlying structural rules through frequent use of the actual

language used in the actual world. According to Howatt (1984), the strong version of CLT can be described as “using English to learn it”.

The development of CLT did not have a uniform trajectory. Different writers have defined it in different ways over the years. According to Littlewood, 1981, communicative view is a result of emphasis on both functional and structural features of language. The CLT practitioners instead of keeping themselves limited to teaching the structural rules and features of the target language provide the learners with lots of opportunities to meaningfully use the target language in different contexts. According to Larsen-Freeman (1986), one of the major characteristics of CLT is the “communicative intent.”

In CLT, meaning is at the centre and it is given the priority in interaction and negotiation between speaker/ listener and writer/reader. A variety of activities like role playing, games, problem solving, etc., are done by the learners and these activities offer them opportunities to communicate with the target language in different contexts where meaning is the main focus.

During the process of practicing different skills, students freely use the target language for communication without giving much thought to correctness. What is the most important to the learners in this approach is to being able to communicate in the first place even if with some mistakes. Teachers do not correct the mistakes of the users frequently thereby encouraging the learners to communicate uninterruptedly.

Larsen-Freeman (1986) placed special emphasis on the small size of the group. It is convenient for small number of learners in a group to better interact for dealing with negotiation and meaning. In small groups they can concentrate on meaningful communication and thereby can achieve authenticity and better quality in learning. In small groups of learners, it is possible to focus on the learners in a deeper way as learner-centered teaching and learning is very much emphasized on by the experts. Teachers should pay attention to the learners according the unique needs of the latter. According to Li (1998), the learning styles, goals, needs, interests and the attitudes of the individual student are not same. Hence, it is essential for teachers to prepare the



course materials taking into consideration the unique individual learning styles, motivation and other factors.

According to Brown (2001), the following features are the pivotal ones with regard to the tenets of CLT

1. Focus for the entire classroom goals are put on all of the components of communicative competence such as grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic.

2. Learners are engaged through language techniques in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Language forms are not of main focus. The focus is instead on the aspects of language that enable learners to achieve those ends..

3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles. Sometimes fluency is given more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.

4. Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in those contexts.

5. Opportunities are provided to the learners to focus on their individual learning process through using their own styles of learning and through applying appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.

6. Teachers play the roles of only the facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing knowledge provider.

According to Richards (2006), under CLT approach language teachers and teaching institutions all around the world soon began to reorganize their teaching, syllabuses, and

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classroom materials that did not make grammar as the starting point. He summarizes the main principles of CLT as follows:

1. Real communication should be the focus of language learning.
2. Opportunities should be provided for learners to experiment and try out what they know.
3. Learners errors should not be frequently checked as errors show that the learners are building up their communicative competence.
4. Opportunities should be given for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency.
5. Different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening should be linked as they normally occur in the real world.
6. Students should be allowed to discover grammar rules.

(Richards, 2006)

### **Communicative Competence**

Canale and Swain (1980) pointed out four types of competence, i.e., grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence and said that these are all parts of communicative competence. According to Canale, grammatical competence "focuses directly on the knowledge and skill required to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances." *Sociolinguistic* means "the learner's ability to use the language properly in different social contexts and demonstrates the learners' ability to go beyond the literal meaning of utterances and recognize what is the intent of such utterances in particular social situations"

Canale went on to define the discourse competence as that "relates to the learner's ability to combine grammatical forms and meaning in an appropriate order for diverse needs." Strategic competence, according to him, is that "relates to the learner's ability to master verbal and non-verbal communication strategies." Savignon (1983, 1997), who has extensively worked on communicative competence, stated that that communicative competence includes four components of competence (Canale & Swain's (1980). Communicative Competence is defined by Savignon (1997) as "functional language proficiency; the expression, interpretation, and

negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons belonging to the same (or different) speech community".

## **Methodology**

In this study 40 teachers from 20 higher secondary colleges took part and they were randomly selected from 15 colleges located both in and around the Dhaka city. An MCQ questionnaire was made consisting of five questions and three follow up interview questions were made. Both survey questions and semi-structured interview questions were made as using questionnaire is an effective way of collecting lots of data in a short time from a large sample while the semi-structured interview questions “allows the interviewers sufficient freedom to digress: that is, the interviewers are permitted to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions.” With the findings from the questionnaire and interviews, the data that were collected were then typed on the computer and the frequency of the data was counted. Then, data analysis was done based on my thorough study of the information collected from the questionnaires and interviews.

The long experience of my teaching career proved very useful in analyzing and interpreting the data thereby giving ‘the meaning, structure and order to the data.’ Further, the related literature review served as the guidelines for the data analysis. Besides, I utilized my intuitive and interpretative abilities to analyze the data systematically.

## **Analysis of the Information**

The current study has found that most teachers have positive notions about CLT approach and are not in agreement with the misconceptions revealed in the research literature. They are almost unanimous about the shortcomings and difficulties faced in implementing CLT approach in all levels of education in Bangladesh. It was found that most teachers carry out CLT based activities in the class rooms i.e. role playing, storytelling, group discussion, listening to audio tape and answering questions, pair work etc. Most students also testified to the fact that the

above mentioned activities are carried out in the class and expressed their liking for the approach. However, inspired of there being a good deal of potential and positive attitudes towards the approach, expected level of success is not achieved by employing CLT approach in Bangladesh. Teachers pointed out a number of challenges and difficulties that impede the successful implementation of this approach in Bangladesh.

The first question that was asked to the teachers was “Do you agree that CLT approach is more effective in acquiring communicative skills than the traditional approach?” In response to the questions, 69% of the respondents answered that they agree on this while 20% disagreed preferring a combination of traditional and communicative approaches. In response to another question, “ Do you do such activities in the class as role playing, doing listening, group discussion , pair work, question-answer etc.?,”, 68% answered that they do the activities and 25% percent said that they do the activities but irregularly while the rest said that they do not do only question answer activity in their classes.

One of the common tendencies as reported in the previous research literature about the Bangladeshi teachers is their persistence in using grammar translation method. In the current study, when teachers were asked to give their feedback on “Should grammar be totally excluded from the CLT approach?”, 72% said that teachers should not totally leave out grammar. Their response was not quite in keeping with the findings of the previous research some of which found that EFL teachers mainly continued the traditional practices in classes (Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999), and were unwilling to use communicative activities (Gamal & Debra, 2001).

In response to a vital question “How much are you satisfied with the learning rate of your students?” 76% answered that they are not satisfied with learners’ success rate while 17% said that they are fairly satisfied and 8% said that they are satisfied. The feedback showed their dissatisfaction about the result that was achieved through the application of CLT approach. Teachers were interviewed to get their feedback on the factors that are responsible for the unsatisfactory result in English teaching in Bangladesh. The interviewees almost unanimously agreed on some common problems that impede the satisfactory rate of success and quality of

English teaching in Bangladesh. The problems that were pointed out are –Teachers’ large size of class, teachers’ workloads, discrepancy between curriculum and exams, students’ lack of motivation and lack of logistic support of the institutes.

83% teachers said that they are to deal with large number of class that has in some cases more than sixty students. The large size of the class prevents them from giving attention to the small group or the individual students sufficiently. They further said that even if they divide the students in small groups, they cannot closely monitor the practice of communication skills of the large class.

Another problem that majority of teachers (75%) identified is the work load of the teachers. They said that they are to teach diverse course and give large number of classes. They added that on most days, they have four classes of long duration. Hence, they can hardly give adequate time to make appropriate course materials suitable for different types of students. According to them, this overload is a major factor behind the poor success in English teaching in Bangladesh.

70 % respondents mentioned the grammar based exam system as another impediment for the unsatisfactory result in learning while 15% of the respondents said that discrepancy in the exams does not affect the CLT application and its result. As the annual and semester end English exams in the mainstream education system in Bangladesh are based on grammar, students often find themselves in a dilemma about whether they should emphasize communication skills or grammar learning as they always remain under pressure to do well in exams. According to Gorsuch (2000), if the exam is concentrated on only grammar knowledge, communicative competence development does not meet the needs of students. According to the findings in a Vietnamese CLT situation, Ellis (1994) also asserted that, the design and content of texts and examinations will need to be consistent with communicative goals for communicative language teaching to become a reality.

The majority respondents (70%) also attributed the low motivation of the students for the improvement of the communicative skills to their dilemma resulting from the discrepancy between exams.

Successful language learning also depends on the supply of the logistics. With the development of technology, it is being now incorporated into the language teaching process and its application produced good results. In Bangladesh, lack of adequate support i.e. free class rooms for practice for extra time, lack of power supply, multimedia and comfortable atmosphere, etc., can pose challenge to the successful implementation of CLT. Majority teachers (87%) agreed on the point that lacks of poor logistics sometimes impede the satisfactory learning whereas only 10% said that the lack can be made up.

Considering the importance of teachers' roles, factors related to teachers can be the causes of poor achievement in the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh. The interview of the participating teachers in this study produced some shortcomings that the teachers themselves confessed.

In respect of the difficulties related to teachers, in response to a question "To what extent, do you use English in guiding students for their improvement in communicative skills?", 58% respondents answered that they use some times, not always. Only 14% answered that they use English most of the times. In response to an open-ended interview question, 55% respondents stated that as they were mostly used to teaching in traditional methods earlier, they still had the tendency to go back to their precious practice of using the first language instead of the target language. They further said that they need to be more fluent, creative and spontaneous in spoken English and provide students with more improvised and spontaneous guidelines.

In order to guide the students in learning appropriate use of English is essential so that the learners can effectively communicate in the practical contexts. For this, teachers must have a good deal of knowledge about sociolinguistic aspects. In answer to a question "How strong are you in the appropriate use of English?", 52% interviewees said that they had inadequacy about

the use of English in real contexts while 36% said that they have fairly good knowledge about the appropriate use of English.

Another problem teachers of Bangladesh faced at almost all levels is the inadequacy of locally contextualized materials. In response to a question “ Do you think that you can provide students with sufficient materials made based on the local contexts”, 78% respondents said that they depend on the books available in the markets and those books, though many of them are written locally, do not have materials developed based on our own contexts. They further said that they also do not have adequate time nor do they have sufficient expertise to develop locally orientated materials. According to Ellis (1996), to make the communicative approach suitable for an Asian situation "it needs to be both culturally attuned and culturally accepted."

In answer to a training-related question, “How much do you think training is needed for making CLT more effective?”, the respondents gave varying answers. 61% respondents stated that training that they receive is not enough. They further said that they need higher training that can make CLT implementation more effective. 30% respondents said that they have received adequate training while 5% said that they received no training at all (Li, 1998; p. 697).

Bangladesh teachers need continuing support with CLT and this can be achieved by appointing highly qualified teaching consultants and conducting in-service teacher education programs (Li, 1998). Proper training can teach them how to use CLT in their classrooms and they can be motivated to overcome the difficulties.

## **Conclusion**

In the light of the above findings, it can be concluded that implementation of CLT approach is facing some major challenges despite the recognition about it that it is one of the most effective methods in the world. The difficulties found from the study are of different types. Among the general difficulties faced in this field are the large size of the class, heavy workloads of the teachers, difference between syllabus and exam system in the mainstream education, lack

of motivation on the part of students and lack of logistic support from the management that are found mostly similar to the findings of the previous research. Besides, these challenges, there are others that are mostly teachers-centered. Like in case of the general difficulties mentioned above, majority teachers provided consistent feedback about the teachers-related problems. Also, they gave similar feedback about their level of satisfaction with the students' learning rate.

According to the confessions of the teachers themselves, it can be further said that a number of shortcomings on the part of the teachers i.e. their poor knowledge about appropriate use of English, poor spoken English skills, inability of making locally contextualized materials due to their work loads and other problems, and lack of training about the overall application of the approach are the major impediments to the successful implementation of CLT approach at the college levels of Bangladesh. Finally it can be said that despite a good deal of positive attitudes and ideas about the CLT, some challenges are faced on the ground level thereby making the application of CLT approach ineffective in Bangladesh.

## **Recommendations**

For overcoming the impediments mentioned above, immediate steps are imperative considering the high importance of English skills in Bangladesh. First of all, comprehensive training must be made mandatory for the teachers of all levels—primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary levels. Materials and resources have to be developed based on the socio-cultural, contextual orientation, needs and inclinations of the learners. Students have to be at the focus while facilitating English class. Teachers have to be aware that they should not be too much authoritative and imposing in the teaching process. Teachers have to change their practice altogether in providing learners most of the time for communicating in a meaningful way and should encourage performance not caring for errors in the first place. Teachers should be focused on the communicative principles and implement them without compromise. Besides, the institutional authorities/management have to act with the practical goals instead of being stuck in the traditional practice or motivated only by the financial goals. The management will lessen the loads of teachers, make the class size small and be more generous in providing logistic support

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such as multimedia, projector, OHP, sound system etc. Both the public and private sectors need be active in addressing the challenges on a priority basis in order to overcome the challenges.

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## *In Love and Trouble and Finding the Green Stone by Alice Walker - An Environmental Approach*

Shubhanku Kochar

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### Abstract

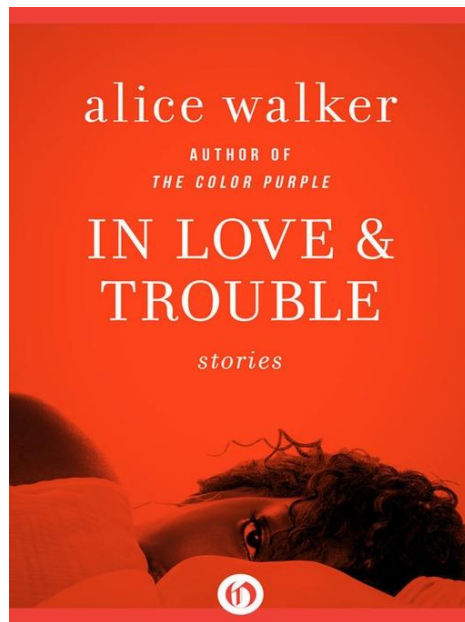
Alice Walker is a renowned a short story writer as well as a famous a poet and novelist. Her career spiraled into excellence after the publication of *The Color Purple* in 1982, and her short stories that got published prior to *The Color Purple* and after it are also well known for their excellent depiction of remarkable women engaged in a stupendous struggle. Hitherto, she has penned three collections of short stories entitled: *In Love and Trouble*; *Stories of Black Women* (1973); *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down: Stories* (1982); *The Way Forward Is with a Broken Heart* (2000). She has also written a short story book for children *Finding the*

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*In Love and Trouble and Finding the Green Stone by Alice Walker - An Environmental Approach*

*Green Stone* (1991). This paper focuses chiefly on four stories beginning with *In Love and Trouble* and *Finding the Green Stone* from an environmental perspective. The effort is to place her stories in the wider context of the current ecological vision. Although not a single story directly speaks of nature and other allied forces, yet a closer reading enables the unearthing of the green platform and the green setting on which the entire edifice is skillfully erected.



### **The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff**

The first story that captures the reader's attention for its analogical resemblance with the biosphere is "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff". It is a story about black magic and its power. Actually, Africans have had deep faith in black magic. Here, one should be clear about the distinction between magic and black magic. Magic is an art. It is a craft which can be mastered by anyone. A magician performs tricks on the stage. He executes his pranks in such a way that beholders are easily befuddled. Its aims are lucrative. Magicians are to be found everywhere, in Asia, Europe and all over the world.

### **Black Magic**

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Black magic, on the other hand, is practiced in the continents like Africa and Asia. Its bearings are such that even lives are destroyed as an end result. People use it for their personal motives. For example, a wife may exercise it on her husband to entrap him in her charm. A husband can punish his wife with its help for her infidelity. One can even practice it for getting rid of enemies with evil spirits. It is neither a moment of social gathering nor a picnic spot like a magic show. It depends for its success on individuals' intuition and belief. It has nothing to do with intellect; more to do with superstitions and fears. Most times it involves the use of `evil spirits, and powerful drugs.

### **Magic and Miracles**

Africans and Asians are noted worldwide for their faith in black magic referred to as voodoo. They often carry with them colorful threads, tie them around their wrists, or around necks and consider them as their charm or talisman. They also believe that every individual possesses his personal spirit. If this spirit turns out to be troublesome, then one has to face immense problems. Afro-Americans, since their essential roots are in Africa, also hold such a thinking pattern. Many writers have extolled Africa for her magic and miracles. For example, Senator Alufalim in "Africa with Magic and Miracle" eulogizes rhythmically his native land:

The magic of Africa is in Africa  
Magic shine only in your heart  
While miracle shine all around  
Your life  
Magic magic magic  
Magic are not real  
Magic cannot save life  
Than death yes someone come every  
Now and then  
Looting stealing  
Out magic with happiness

Unknowing to them that  
Magic are not real.

Africans also assumed spirits in nature, like many ancient animistic religions all over the world. Just like black magic depends on superstition and intuition, similarly existence of nature as a divine being, or a living being depends on one's imagination and belief. A rationalist can never believe that jungles are full of spirits, because ancestral spirits reside there. For him, a forest is nothing but a physical fact that can be destroyed to build nuclear power plants. For an African of the old beliefs, a forest is as sacrosanct as his own life. He feels intimidated in destroying it. When blacks reached America, they brought with them such an ideology. They must have surely handed down these values to posterity.

The present story "The Revenge of Hannah Kemhuff" is also about the triumph of such a belief system. Walker must have listened or experienced in her vicinity such incidents which changed life on the basis of faith and belief.

### **Instance of Black Magic**

In the story too, there is a black woman who slides in the lap of black magic to make right a wrong. Hannah Kemhuff, a mother of four children, visits a food distributing counter in a southern town during Depression. Her husband deserts her there and goes after a whore. A white girl behind the counter who is later addressed as Mrs. Holley denies her the share that she deserves. Her excuse is that since Hannah is dressed better than her, she does not require any food. She takes her stamps from her and gives them to a black gambler. She laughs at her from behind the counter and becomes responsible for the miseries that later beset the black lady.

Her children die due to hunger. She herself becomes a whore and takes to drinking. She undergoes conversion and later meets Tante Rosie, a black magician with a plea that she can no longer bear the face of a white moppet grinning behind her hands. Tante Rosie, on her part, gives her candles and some incense to burn and a prayer to recite twice a day for nine days. She

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informs her to beseech the Man-God who in return will persuade the all pervading goddess to punish Mrs. Holley. In the meanwhile, she assures that she herself will collect the nails, hair, clothes, fishes and water of the target and will safely burry them in a safe place and as a result, the culprit will not outlive poor Hannah for more than six months.

Everything works according to the plan. The narrator who is working as assistant of Tante Rosie goes and meets Mrs. Holley in person. She tells her that she has come there to gather some nails and other accessories of Mrs. Holley so that the wrong perpetrated thirty years ago can be righted. Initially, Mrs. Holley does not believe in her story. She even says that she has no trust in black magic. It is a purely scientific attitude. Later, Mrs. Holley is able to recall Hannah and her own behavior towards the poor girl. Her life undergoes a change from there onwards.

First, she distances her black friend cum maid from her. Then she starts eating breakfast in her room upstairs. Later, she does everything in her room. She gathers her stray hair from floor and comb, lest they be picked by anybody. She stops flushing and gathers her waste in barrels and plastic bags and starts storing them in closets. Her husband starts sleeping in the separate room of her nanny's house due to the foul smell. The mouth that grinned behind the counter stops grinning. She dies due to anxiety and foul smell.

### **African Black Magic Wins!**

It seems as if Walker is out and out to celebrate her African heritage. Symbolically, this can be seen as a suggestive remedy for environmental disasters. The world today is on the verge of extinction. It seems as if there is no possible solution until one accepts the African (and all animistic religions of the world) belief of spirits in nature. This entire story becomes a long metaphor of celebrating African legacy in which intuition and imagination wins over intellect and scientific attitude. It is this very attitude that is pernicious for the health of the biosphere. Unless one is sensitive and imaginative enough to envisage life in nature, one will not spare it.

### **Nature and Belief Intertwined**

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How nature is deeply intertwined in African belief system can easily be seen in the curse prayer that Hannah and the young assistant recite:

That the South wind shall scorch their bodies and make them wither and shall not be tempered to them. That the North wind shall freeze their blood and numb their muscles and that it shall not be tempered to them. That the West wind shall blow away their life's breath and will not leave their hair grow, and that their fingernails shall fall off and their bones shall crumble. That the East wind shall make their minds grow dark, their sight shall fail and their seed dry up so that they shall not multiply... I pray that the sun shall not shed its rays on them in benevolence, but instead it shall beat down on them and burn them and destroy them. I pray that the moon shall not give them peace, but instead shall deride them and decry them and cause their minds to shrivel. (Walker 65-66)

The very mentioning of wind, sun, moon and stars even in the curse prayer goes on to divulge how close Africans lived to nature and how they considered nature to be a living force. It is perhaps this proximity and attitude that Walker wishes to revive.

### ***Strong Horse Tea***

“Strong Horse Tea” is another story that has ecological bearings in it. Here, Walker for the first time becomes apparent in her advocacy of nature. It seems as if she is glorifying homemade medicines in opposition to allopathic medicine. She is clearly here trying to revive African and ancient Indian way in which nature was considered as a prime doctor. She was considered as storehouse of all remedies.

Yamuna Prasad points out that each and every plant that was seeded in the verandahs of ancient houses of India used to have medicinal substance. One is here reminded of *Ramayana* where Lakshman, the brother of lord Rama succumbs to a fatal injury while fighting with a

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demon. He is finally cured by medicinal herbs that are brought from mountain tops. In India, many saints and ayurvedic teachers even today brag about the curing abilities of plants and animals. For example, a cow's urine is believed to be elixir for heart patients. Likewise, the leaves of neem and tulsi plant are considered beneficial in various diseases. Cow's milk is often hailed as elixir on the earth.

In African societies too, nature was supposed to be a balm for all wounds. The instance in *Things Fall Apart* immediately comes to the mind where Okonkwo, the central character rushes into jungle to gather herbs for his dying daughter. In *Roots*, one encounters African societies where there are doctors who treat and cure patients with roots and leaves.

Randy Malamud also urges man in his essay, "An Ecocritical Ethic" to preserve animals. They too are important. They are part of a larger ecosystem. They contribute in the overall scheme of things. With the advent of science and technology, man has become ingrate. To gratify his own ulterior motives, he has started codifying animals in images. Walker in her famous essay "Am I Blue?" chides man's habit of patting hens for eggs, cows for milk, pigs for meat and snakes for skin.

In "Strong Horse Tea" too she seems to be presenting animals, particularly horse as a means of curing disease. There is a mother named Rannie Toomer. Her son, Snooks is suffering severely from pneumonia and whooping cough. The mother is impatiently waiting for the doctor to come from town. Sarah, an old black sagacious woman with home remedies, urges her to give her son some of her homemade medicines. Rannie Toomer is reluctant initially. Later, she realizes that doctor won't come because the mailman whom she entrusted with the task of seeking a doctor, did not progress beyond old Sarah's house. She relinquishes her waiting and beseeches Sarah with the words, "I'll do anything you say do, Aunt Sarah ... Anything. Just, please God, make him get better!" (Walker 86).

It is raining outside when the helpless mother abides by old Sarah's instructions. She picks up her coat and goes out to gather some strong horse tea. She walks in the mud. There is a

thunder blast in the sky followed by lightening, but she stumbles as she rushes towards the horse and gathers the desired object in her plastic shoe. The horse snores and kicks her. She falls down, but she saves the substance from spilling on the floor. She realizes that the front of her shoe is cracked, so she sticks her face on it to prevent any spilling of the content. With her ankles deep in mud and freezing in her wet shabby coat, she runs towards home of the boy to give still warm horse tea to baby Snooks who unfortunately has died by this time.

Old Sarah kept on imploring her to adopt her methods earlier. It was she who was delaying. Had she been quick in accepting, her child might have survived. It was she who did not trust nature. So, she had to pay the penalty. Nature always remains bountiful. It is human beings who turn deaf ears to her calls. Rannie Toomer had full faith in the doctor, but he never came. He let her down. She got tired of waiting. Nature is omnipresent. One is not required to wait for her. She is always there. She does not follow the ways of dominant structure. Her munificence is transferred onto everyone without partiality whether it is ruler or ruled.

### **Eco-Critical View of *Strong Horse Tea***

However, this story can also be reinterpreted from another eco-critical viewpoint as well. Kaori Mori has raised the issue of environmental injustice in both American society and literature. According to the critic, American society has remained environmentally disadvantageous for minorities like blacks, Native Americans, Jews, Hispanics and Asian immigrants. These minorities often reside in unhygienic neighborhood. There are coalmines, barren lands, brothels, railway tracks, polluted ponds and nuclear power plants all around these people. She terms this injustice as environmental racism. For her, whites live in white neighborhood and black live in black neighborhood. Every individual has a right to clean air, water and food to survive, but these basic accessories are alleged to have been craftily stolen from minorities by the dominant culture. As a result, there is dirt and filth all around. This is the reason that many NGOs in America are fighting for better environment for these groups.

In “Strong Horse Tea”, Rannie Toomer lives in a dilapidated house. There are cracks in the window panes and walls. She is poor, so she cannot afford strong walls and roofs. Her son is dying of pneumonia and whooping cough because cool air creeps from the chinks all over the house. She has to use advertising pamphlets to cover these gaps. Her house is in a pasture surrounded by animals. After reading the story, one gets the impression that the house is bound to collapse if a strong thundering storm hits the town. The thundering in the sky is enough to end her son’s life. The house fails to protect him from the calamities of weather. There is mud all around. Rapes and desertions seem the order of the town because Rannie Toomer has no husband. She was not married, and yet she had a child. Most probably, she was raped or her lover deserted her.

This place is totally segregated from the larger world. Doctors do not come there. People survive on their ignorance. They are impelled to rely on home remedies of a local old lady, Sarah. It is this lady who instructs Rannie Toomer to bring strong horse tea to cure her son. She is notorious for giving people cat’s blood and mess of bat’s wings. In such ignorance and backwardness, nobody can lead a happy life. Walker with this short story seems to be demanding environmental justice for her own brethren. She seems to be trying hard to attract the attention of masses-politicians, bureaucrats and rich whites - to demand justice for those who live in environmentally dispossessed localities. It is sometimes difficult reconcile positions: for example, sometimes nature cure is praised and at another level nature cure based on belief is decried.

Nobody lives in a vacuum. There are so many influences that shape an individual’s character. Environment is one of them. A healthy mind always resides in a healthy body. Both of them are impossible in unhealthy environment. So, to make a nation thrive and prosper, it is inevitable to create healthy individuals and for that one must generate healthy environment.

### *The Flowers*

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Another short story, “The Flowers,” can also be studied from an eco-critical perspective. Here, nature is present in abundance. In fact, she presents nature as a vast landscape of dense greenery that is missing in other short stories analyzed previously. Walker, being a female could not escape from converging both gender and nature. H.K. Manion aptly suggests, “Several authors (Momsen, Visvanathan, Sturgeon, Turpin, Miles, Mellor et al.,) have stated that certain ecologically damaging issues have more of a detrimental effect on women than on men, particularly as women tend to be more involved in family provisions and household management”. (5)

If disturbance in nature affects women more, then by implication, peace and harmony in nature should also affect her more. This is what Walker seems to be suggesting through this short story. There is a small girl who jumps cheerfully, runs cheerfully in fences, pigpens and hen houses. She gathers flowers, sings songs and feels at ease while exploring woods. She is in a state of bliss while in proximity with nature. Walker describes the entire scene vividly as:

It seemed to Myop as she skipped lightly from hen house to pigpen to smokehouse that the days had never been as beautiful as these....She felt light and good in warm sun. She was ten and nothing existed for her but her song, the stick clutched in her dark brown hand, and the tat-de-ta-ta-ta of accompaniment. (Walker 106)

Later, she feels a bit gloomy and starts circling back towards her house when she suddenly encounters an unimaginable scene. Her foot strikes a dead body lying on the ground covered with earth and debris. She discovers that the person lying is a man. He is a tall man and when she unearths his head, she finds that his teeth are broken. Rejected by the society, he is accepted by mother earth which is symbolized by the earth and debris that is spread all over his head and face.

### **Importance of the Story *The Flowers***

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This short story is very significant for three reasons.

Primarily, it provides immense relief from extreme heat like temporary and sporadic rain does. Just like, an ephemeral shower soothes parching throats and earth from intense heat; likewise reading the above analyzed stories and then coming onto this one, is like passing through blazing sun and arriving abruptly in the shade of a green tree. There is no nature in between to shelter the readers. All kinds of unimaginable and stupendously horrific incidents like a father smiting his daughter's breast, a woman kindling fire in her own wedding bed and thereby nullifying her own existence, a woman dying from anxiety and foul smell of her own waste, a helpless mother running after a horse to gather its waste so that her dying son can be saved and a pious black woman thrown out of the white church are mentioned in detail. After all this, one finds "The Flowers", a smooth, short, delicate, exquisitely splendid and poetic short story which quenches tired minds and souls. Though, there is mention of a dead body and lynching towards the end, yet one should not forget that rain often brings mud with it.

Secondly, it reveals how at ease a woman can feel when she is in the lap of nature. Experts often explain this as a psychological fact. They are of the opinion that since the exploiter in both the cases is man, hence both woman and nature feel one in their suffering.

Last, but not the least, the story produces a kind of sensual pleasure by mentioning sweet and colorful flowers thereby reminding its readers of John Keats. The flowers like: strange blue flowers with velvety ridges, sweet suds bush full of the brown, fragrant buds and wild pink roses are enough to satisfy the eyes, noses and hearts of imaginative readers.

### ***To Hell With Dying***

Last story in the collection "To Hell With Dying" also calls for an environmental approach. Here too, Walker has provided a green setting, though metaphorically. It is the last story, yet its significance is more than any other in the entire collection. It sermonizes artistically what mankind had and what it has. It engulfs contemporary attitude implicitly. It can be taken as

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a sweet bantering satire on mankind. One can understand the stored wisdom in the story if one draws again the analogy within the paradigm of eco vision and the text itself.

Once upon a time, the land was full of trees, forests and animals. Human beings were living in comradery with nature. There was a mutual and symbiotic relationship between them. The society was hailed as organic society in which not only the humans were dependent on one another but on the non humans as well. The concept of 'community' and 'we' were rampant. With the passage of time, community broke up. Community was broken into individuals and we into I and me. Man became self centered and detached from his non human surroundings.

This shift in man's outlook has imperiled the earth. Man began to rush for satisfying his own whims. The existence of the other, chiefly the earth and the natural habitat was ignored under the wheel of 'I do not care'. Slowly and steadily, the earth became bald. Her treasure like: trees, woods, flowers, birds and animals were mercilessly obliterated. A strong urge was felt to save it because the entire life system was somewhat affected. There began campaigns for saving her. In earlier societies, earth remained charitable and reciprocated respect and love. Everybody used to join hands in loving her and saving her. But now, people do not have time. So they cannot either love or save. Unless people again join hands in saving her, she won't be able to continue. The earth will perish one day if this rat race of earning more and more continues. It is this ecological vision that "To Hell with Dying" seems to portray competently.

### **Mr. Sweet**

It is a story about Mr. Sweet. He is an old drunkard who is sober and charitable. He was like family for narrator's family. He used to visit them regularly. They all loved him and he too on his part would play and sing for them and with them. He was a guitarist and would hum sweet songs. The young narrator loved his kinky white hair and often buried her small fingers in them. Whenever he would come to their house, they would stop everything and sit around him. This Mr. Sweet can be seen as an equivalent to earth. He was loved and in return gave love. Though, he was often drunk, yet he knew how to control himself.

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He was a lonely person. He lived in a kind of isolated house. His wife had already died and his son did not live with him. He was often found struck in a kind of death ritual that narrator's family was required to revive him time and again. Narrator's elder brothers and sisters got maximum opportunities to revive him. They would go to his home and the father would say, "To hell with dying... These children want Mr. Sweet!" (Walker 116). After this, the youngest child would jump on the bed and on Mr. Sweet and start kissing him all over his face. Then, he or she would tickle him down in his stomach and Mr. Sweet would revive placating everybody's tension.

This process continued for several years. Everybody would join hands in saving Mr. Sweet. And Mr. Sweet, till he was ninety years old, continued to bestow his affection on the family. When the narrator was about to complete her doctorate, she received a telegram informing that Mr. Sweet was about to die. She left everything and flew back home. When she reached his home, she found that nobody was there except her parents. Her elder siblings were living at far off places and her brother who always accompanied her in earlier revival rituals was in Asia as a soldier. Her father again pronounced this time with a difference, "To hell with dying man! My daughter is home to see Mr. Sweet!". (122)

She bent down and placed her head on the pillow next to Mr. Sweet and gently stroked his eyes. They opened and looked at her. They shined because they recognized her. His lips parted gently to smile then he began to trace her hair with his fingers and stopped over her ears. He cupped his hands around her and when she opened her eyes, his were closed and her father gave her Mr. Sweet's piano. This time, they were not able to save him. Symbolically, this anticipates the future of humanity. The existence of human beings depends upon the existence of earth. Walker seems to be preaching that just like one or two persons were not able to save Mr. Sweet, one plant cannot make the entire earth green. Everybody has to come together. It is the right time when one should understand that egocentrism should be given up for eco-centrism. The world cannot be saved by the efforts of one. The concepts of community, interdependence and symbiosis are to be circulated and adopted if one wants to keep the earth as a habitable

planet. Otherwise, one must be ready to confront the dooms day in the form of a great deluge, or may be a mighty quake that will nullify human beings from not only the annals of history but of geography as well.

### **Joanna Patricia and Alice Walker**

A short poem by Joanna Patricia expresses this wisdom poetically just like Walker has expressed this wisdom narratively:

Garbages are everywhere  
Looks like everyone doesn't care  
About our Mother Earth who's crying with fear  
That she might eternally disappear

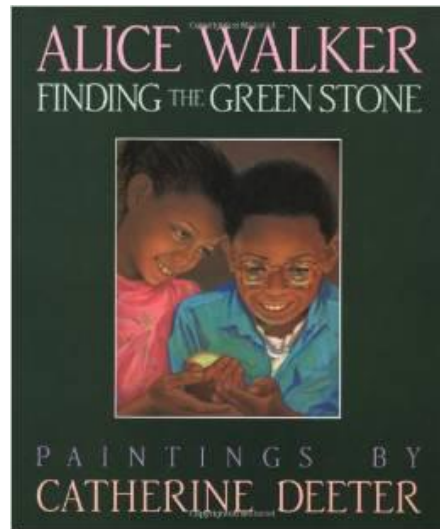
Storms, hurricanes and so much more  
And we really can't take it anymore  
For the 'end' is coming  
And we don't know where we are really going

Everyone must cooperate  
Before its going to be late  
In saving our beloved planet  
While we still can, plan it

Let us empower our minds  
To go beyond the lines  
In seeking for ways to preserve our land  
For the future of the world is in our hands!



## *Finding the Green Stone*



After reading stories in *In Love and Trouble*, when one comes to *Finding the Green Stone*, twenty years have passed. The world has witnessed the most devastating incidents like Bhopal Gas Tragedy and Chernobyl Disaster. Many space shuttles have been launched into space and many species have already disappeared from the earth. The world has come out openly in seminars and conferences on the issue of environment. So, one perceives a remarkable change in Walker's attitude as well. In her previous collection, she was covert and implicit in addressing the issue of environment. In this later book, she too becomes overt and explicit. This does not mean that every sentence and stanza has green posturing in finding the green stone. No doubt it is, yet it won't be exaggeration if one concludes that this book is partially overt and partially covert in touching upon environmental issues. Its ideological base and the characters in it are truly bio-centric yet the content or the story line requires to be dissected properly before a green platform is discovered. Though it is a novella, or a little bit of a long story as compared to the short story, because it runs into almost 35 pages, but if one reads it as an allegory then it generates more sense.

### **The New Threat – Human's Mismanagement of Natural Resources**

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When Walker writes in late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world has come far enough from the concept of heaven and hell. The new threat that appalls everyone is posed by man's mismanagement of his natural resources. Depletion in the ozone layer and scarcity of pure water haunts every intellectual that is why *Finding the Green Stone* can be viewed as an environmental allegory. Its contents and its characters hold a mirror for man to view his own misdeeds. It is a powerful book that documents and extols the concept of community, interdependence, interconnectedness, mutuality, reciprocity and symbiosis. So, it can safely be argued that the concepts like community and interconnectedness that was mildly touched in the last story "To Hell with Dying" in *In Love and Trouble* are explained in detail here.

"Everything is related to everything else" the first law of ecology laid down by Commoner is at work everywhere in ecosphere and in this book too. In class text books, everybody learns the concept of the food chain. A small fish is swallowed by the big fish. The big fish is gulped by whale. The whale is slain by man. Another common pattern is grass is eaten by rabbits; rabbits by tigers, or lions and tigers, or lions by hunters. In this way, the chain continues. If anything is taken out then it disturbs the smooth flowing of cycle. For example, Lyn White Jr. records that Aldous Huxley used to spend his vacations near a valley during his childhood. That was a wonderful place with green grass all around. When he revisited the place as a grown up, he was confounded to discover bushes of grass instead of the small delicate one that had often welcomed him when he was a child. He later found that the rabbits who kept a complete check on the unnecessary growth of the grass were forcibly murdered by local peasants.

Everything has its own importance in the larger scheme of things. The smallest flower is as precious as the largest mountain. From ants to elephants, every being contributes in the larger food chain. Removal of one is bound to impact the entire system. So, Commoner's first law of ecology can be rephrased as, "Everything is dependent on everything else." One should respect everybody. Just as a house is built by putting together so many bricks so the entire system too is built by the joining of both human and non human. Just as, if one brick is taken out from the

structure, it is disfigured, so if one being whether speaking or non-speaking is taken out or disrespected then it can collapse the entire system.

### **John's Metamorphosis**

*Finding the Green Stone* is the story of Johnny's metamorphosis. Like a classical Greek tragedy, the hero suffers from hamartia. Then he undergoes anagnorisis which results in peripeteia. There are moments in the story where one not only sympathizes with the hero, but also appreciates him. Thereby catharsis is also achieved. Its structure also follows strictly the Aristotelian system of cause and effect. It also abides by to the unity of place and action. However, unlike classical tragedy, it has a happy ending and the dominant influencing agency is also environment, instead of Greek gods and goddesses.

Johnny and Katie are siblings. They both have their own iridescent green stones. The children are very happy while playing with them. The stones are small enough to fit easily in their palms. They hold them gleefully before the sun and drop them gently in the water to pick it back. They are spending extremely joyful and comfortable days. One day, unfortunately Johnny, the hero loses his green stone. He searches for it everywhere, but in vain. From here, one can trace the analogy between food chain or inter-dependence and the happenings in the story. Here, the story acquires allegorical structure where characters and their deeds symbolically represent some other things actually.

Johnny suffers because he disrespected others. He loses his precious possession just because he had shown a kind of contempt or dislike for others. When he and his sister are searching for his green stone, they arrive at Mr. Roseharp's cottage. Johnny is afraid to go upstairs. Actually, he had called Mr. Roseharp bad names when the latter was going to the store. Johnny himself confesses: "Since I called you a bad name... I lost my green stone." It is this realization and repentance that fetches Mr. Roseharp's company for them. Mr. Roseharp instead of fuming at them, tucks his shirt in his pants and comes down to help them in finding the green stone.

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## Mr. Roseharp's Help

Next, they go to their father who is working in a forest. He is the driver of pulpwood truck that he first loads and then drives. Johnny had initially disrespected his father's occupation. He has often felt ashamed and embarrassed. Now, in the moment of realization, he confesses: "Last week I told Daddy I was ashamed of him for being the driver of a stupid pulpwood truck. I hurt his feelings and I don't know how to tell him I'm sorry." Johnny's father understands his feelings and consoles him with the words that he knew why he had said that. He, like his son, also hates the pulpwooding just because it harms the trees. Johnny's realization again procures his father's support for him.

Next, they visit their mother who is the only community doctor. Johnny had also registered his grievance for her. He wants to change his mother just because he does not get hugs, cookies and milk just like the other kids. He now realizes that his loss is nothing in comparison with the grand work that his mother is doing. His mother chides him severely:

I can't keep up with every single thing, Johnny," said his mother, in a voice that sounded like she was tired of trying. "Maybe if you'd do a better job of cleaning up your room you wouldn't need help finding your stuff. And no, I do not have your green stone. I have my own.

## Recognition of Love for the Family

Johnny realizes here that how much he loves his mother and would never wish to change her. He also realizes that he has lost his green stone and would never find it back without his mother's help. This is enough to get his mother's support. It seems as if she has seen repentance in his eyes. She comes and consoles her son:

Listen, son, everybody has his or her own green stone. You ought to know that by now. Nobody can give it to you and nobody can take it away. Only you can misplace or lose it. If you've lost it, it's your own fault... We will get everybody in the community to help look for your green stone anyway!

Johnny has also initially insulted his sister Katie. She was trying to help him. She would often bring her stone for him to play and he thought that it was his stone because it looked brighter and bigger. Once even, he stole her stone only to realize that it did not dazzle in his hands. Later, he atones for his mistakes and seeks forgiveness. Now, Katie denies any help. He again pleads, but she gainsays him again. After this, she observes that her stone was flickering and losing its luster. However, she reconciles with him and says that she feels the happiest when he is happy. It is the acknowledgement of others happiness that brings shine back on her stone.

### **In Search of the Stone**

With the help of his community members, Johnny starts searching for his stone. There is his father, mother, sister, his teacher, minister, shoe man, paperboy, a baby, a dog and all his classmates and friends. They search everywhere: in orchards, under doorsteps, in flower beds and on mountains. Finally, they feel tired and come to rest under a big tree. There, Johnny has a moment of realization. He asks everybody to go home. He apologizes that they had wasted their entire afternoon for his sake, in finding what they cannot help in finding. He picks a small rock and starts fondling it. At this, his sister Katie replies that they wanted to be with him when he found it. Here, after listening to this, Johnny feels warmth gushing out of his body and enveloping everybody else. He looks at the rock and is surprised to find that it is his very green stone. He begins to dance around the tree and they all return his smiles.

### **Food Chain and the Stone**

Several points immediately strike an ecologically conscious eye. First, it is the spirit of community and respect. Everything is important in its way. When Johnny is rude and disrespects

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others, he breaks the chain. As a result, he feels isolated and loses his precious stone. In food chain too, if any member is discredited, insulted, destroyed then it affects the entire system. The moment, Johnny realizes his fault and apologizes, he is accepted back in the community. His sister too, when she poses arrogance, is at the verge of losing her stone, but when she thinks of Johnny's happiness, her stone begins to shine again. Walker seems to be asserting the principle of community and interconnectedness. Everything and every being is important. Even his father's pulp-wooding business is important because it is the only way he can keep his family alive. One should not be selfish to think about one's own self. Johnny's mother is a doctor. She thinks for the benefit of all. That is why, she has the solution for Johnny's problem.

### **Significance of Personal Names**

Another point that contributes to the allegorical meaning of the story is the names of the characters. Just like, in morality plays, there are characters as personified abstractions like: Pride, Glutton and Anger. Here too, nature is personified as human beings. The characters are named after nature. Johnny truly represents a human being, but his sister Katie connotes cat. His father is Mr. Oaks, his neighbor is Mr. Roseharp. His mother is addressed as Dr. Oaks. His teacher is Miss Rivers. The minister is named as Mr. Skies while the paperboy is referred to as Sunny. Shoeshine man is called as Mr. Birdfield. This is very symbolic in two ways. First, Johnny, the human being is shown at the mercy of all others. It strengthens the notion that human being is powerless without nature. He needs help from others. Johnny is unable to find his stone until they all join in the pursuit. Though, they cannot help him in finding his stone, yet a symbiotic kind of relationship is necessary, before Johnny accomplishes his task. Even a small baby and dog are brought in to help Johnny. It seems to be a nostalgic picture of the time when man and nature lived in harmony. Those were the days when everybody respected the sanctity of others. It is the disregard of others' rights of every sort that produces ecological threats. Nature does not demand too much. What she requires is respect and care and in return she blesses all by giving her bounties to mankind. Johnny too wins his battle when he respects nature. He is lonely, segregated, until he hesitates or accepts that he was mistaken. By portraying Johnny's success only after he acknowledges others, as well as nature. Walker seems to be presenting a model before modern man to emulate.

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Secondly, such names as Miss Rivers, Mr. Skies, Roseharp and Birdfield are crucial because they may remind small children of their surroundings. In contemporary scenario, a child grows in closed compartments where science and technology conceal nature. After reading such a story, a child will surely become aware of things that he or she is missing while sitting in front of laptops and play stations. Last, but not the least, the title too is symbolic. It is *Finding the Green Stone*. Here, a black writer is writing about the color green not the color black, white, brown or yellow. In the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, W.E.B Dubois spoke regretfully, “The problem of 20<sup>th</sup> century is the problem of color line” (5). He surely was addressing the issue of black versus white. Towards the close of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Walker reiterates the metaphor of color. Today, more than white or black or red or brown, the color green matters the most. It is the greenery that is disappearing from the earth. In the story, there is greenery everywhere symbolized by the green stone which is a personal possession. Everybody has his or her green stone. Mr. Oaks wears it on a thong. Mrs. Oaks keeps it inside her cheek. Katie wears it as an earring. Roseharp wears it on his hat while the small baby is carrying it on the handle of its pacifier. The dog bears it on its collar while the tree has one among its many lives. Walker seems to be lamenting on contemporary scene by presenting the greenery as ubiquitous. In a way, it can be construed as a mild warning for the present day reader to mend his ways otherwise the world will not look nice without green color. One has to rise above the regional and geographical concerns of black and white color and should think about the global issue of green hue.

### **To Sum Up**

To sum up, it can be asserted with conviction that Walker writes with a mission. No doubt, she is a black woman writer raised in rural Georgia, but her vision is broad enough to encompass the entire humanity. In her short stories, she undisputedly writes about the problems of black women in black and white America, but her canvas is wide enough to entail the entire ecosphere. With the issues of race, sex and class, the problem of biospheric upheavals are skillfully woven like the pattern of a veteran black woman quilting in her yard by piecing together diverse scraps of clothes ranging from her ancestors to contemporaries to bring them

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together on one platform. Alice Walker sincerely adds the concerns of environment with diverse issues like race, gender and class that enables her to provide a green platform or green setting to her stories. Sometimes, the ecological concerns are implicit in the text and at other times they become explicit, but that is in line with the appearance of the text during particular moments in history as is depicted in the above analysis.

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## Addressing the Unaddressed: Considering Specific Teaching Context in Exploiting Short Stories to Teach Language to EFL Learners

Shuvo Saha, M.A. in ELT

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### Abstract

All the research works on the significance of literature in ELT (English language teaching) almost unanimously concur to the point that literary texts as authentic source of language input have tremendous potential to aid language teaching. Short story in particular is considered with added value due to its motivating nature which is embedded within. This paper exploits two short stories and designs a series of language tasks to teach the English language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing— to tertiary level students from private universities in EFL setting. The aim is to acquaint EFL instructors with the way short stories can

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be exploited as text to design language activities and implement them effectively utilizing all the available facilities of a particular teaching context like that of private universities. The study, moreover, discusses some of the pragmatic challenges of employing literature for language teaching purpose and finally reflects on the scope for further research.

## **1. Introduction**

In twenty-first century's trend of language teaching pedagogy in EFL setting, there has been a constant cry for incorporating authentic materials that considers learners' impulse as opposed to traditional course books, which according to Lau, include many dully written materials neglecting the interests of language learners (2002, p.1). A number of researchers, in this vein, advocate literature to be used as a resource as well as a tool in EFL classroom (see Lau, 2002; Khatib et al., 2011; Yeasmin et al., 2011; Pardede, 2011; Khatib & Rahimi, 2012).

Literature wonderfully renders language learning activity an exclusively human affair by, according to Collie & Slater (1987), offering a bountiful and significantly varied body of written material that deals with enduring human issues. Kramsch (1993, p. 175) maintains that literary texts give students "access to a world of attitudes and values, collective imaginings and historical frames of reference that constitute the memory of a people or speech community", which in turn broadens the latter's horizon of understanding the common human nature. Since literature is dialogic in nature, it provides learners with "opportunities for the dialogic negotiation of meaning" and involves them in the dialectic of meaning production (ibid.). Besides, by enabling learners to control and manage their feelings, such as anxiety and nervousness, in difficult situations, for say at the time of taking high stake tests, literature nurtures their 'emotional intelligence' (Ghosn, 2002).

As it comes to teaching language in EFL context, literature potentially offers teachers a wealth of conveniences to capitalize upon. From a linguistic point of view, various grammatical structures and subtle vocabulary items in literary texts raise learners' awareness of the range of the target language (Povey, 1967); in addition, learners get to know the complex structures such

as dangling construction, inversion, subjunctives etc. as they learn language through literature (Khatib et al., 2011). Collie and Slater (1987, p. 4) report, "...in reading literary texts students...gain additional familiarity with many different linguistic uses, forms and conventions of the written mode: with irony, exposition, argument, narration, and so on". They further add that many genuine features of written language, such as "the formation and function of sentences, the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas" are presented at many levels of difficulty in literature (ibid.).

As an authentic source of linguistic input, literature not only provides scope for examination of language but stirs the imagination of students (Ghosn, 2002). With the activation of imagination, as Lau (2002, p. 1) observes, learners learn to interact with the text imaginatively. Besides, literature is a sound resource for developing students' inferring ability since literary texts are rich in multilayered meaning and it requires learners to be actively involved to interpret the covert multiple implications of the text (Lazar, 1993, p. 19). Thus, they learn to read, infer, and think creatively and become more aware of the target language. Furthermore, Maley (1989) suggests that literature deals with universal such concepts as love, hatred, death, nature, and the like that are common to every language, culture, and individual; therefore, when students encounter such concepts in literature while language learning, some way or the other, they form a personal attachment with the corresponding text, thus, with the entire learning process (Khatib & Rahimi, 2012, p. 33).

## **2. Significance of Short Story in Language Teaching**

Amongst various genres of literature that can be employed for the purpose of teaching language, short story receives considerable attention for its length and inner construction. Due to its shortness, short story is feasible enough to be wholly covered in a single class (Collie & Slater, 1991). Hence, for a teacher there remains ample opportunity to introduce more than one story, which would bring with them various ranges of plots and characters, within a couple of classes. This may result in an increased level of motivation on the part of students as they would be exposed to something new in each different class. In addition, according to Collie and Slater

(1991), with usually one plot and a few characters short stories are not too complicated for students to deal with on their own. Short stories are generally concise yet lucid enough to communicate the single plot with learners effectively and are less likely to disorient the latter by derailing from the track of the text. In fact, the compact nature of short story lets students focus and reflect even more on the text to foster their higher order thinking.

So far as the selection of short story is concerned, Pardede (2011, pp. 18-19) exhorts that the vocabulary and syntactic structure of the story selected must fit the level of learners. Very long sentences run the risk of not being understood by students, consequently to bore and demotivate them to read. The author particularly warns against choosing “short stories with archaic, slang, foreign words, and allusions”. For teaching students below intermediate level, ones that have “sentences imitating the speech of a particular locality or ignorant people or foreigners” ought to be avoided. Above all, to ensure all these, the researcher observes the importance of determining the readability of the text on the part of the teacher before making a selection (ibid.). Beside these, Spack (1985) suggests that a teacher should choose stories that he/she most likes to read and teach; while McKay stresses to consider texts that pertain to students’ life experience and interests in the selection process, since such category of texts instigate learners to read through enjoyment (2001, p. 322).

However, for the purpose of designing student centered language activities, two English short stories are exploited in this study. Anton Chekov’s “The Album” (see appendix 1) is the one that is being selected for teaching listening and speaking, whereas “A Long Walk Home” (see appendix 2) by Jason Bocarro is the other story using which I have planned lessons for teaching reading and writing skills.

### **3. Motivation for the Study**

Over the years researchers have though designed different language activities for the purpose of teaching four English language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—using literature as tool, in those designs there is hardly any reference of specific teaching context addressing which the language tasks should have been devised (e.g. see Lau, 2002; Pardede,

2011). The lesson plans are designed in a generalized manner creating the impression that teaching contexts, such as institutions from public and private sector, in EFL setting are homogenous. However, considering that every EFL milieu denotes distinctively varied teaching contexts even within its own periphery in relation to factors such as class size, level of learners, available time and equipments for teaching, and so forth, this study views the necessity of formulating language tasks that correspond to a certain teaching context.

In its venture, the paper sets private universities in EFL setting as its target teaching context and accordingly exploits short stories to design a set of tasks to teach language to first/second semester students. The lessons are devised taking classes into consideration which might have students from various academic disciplines such as English, Engineering, Business, Pharmacy, and so on. The suggested set of activities for teaching a particular linguistic skill is suitable for a 90 minutes class that contains a limited number of students, for say 25-30. The classroom must have a board (preferably whiteboard) to write on. Presence of technological equipment such as overhead projector (OHP) and multimedia projector are optional. The ideal space of the classroom has to be large enough so that it can accommodate at least 60 people at a time; such spacious room would be essential for executing different pair and group works, in performing which students have to move throughout the class. Additionally, to ensure free movement of students and teacher in the class there has to be arrangement of conference chair for individual student which can easily be moved during group and pair works. This would also provide the teacher with opportunity for monitoring students' activities through moving around the class and amongst the students. Besides these, the classroom needs to have a free flow of air and light to keep the teaching-learning atmosphere fresh, lively, energetic, and thus, active. Even if natural light and air do not have access to the room, those can be supplied artificially through tube lights and air conditioners, which should not be too difficult to be afforded by private universities.

#### **4. Text Exploitation**

For the purpose of teaching four language skills, namely, reading, writing, listening, and speaking, the two selected short stories— “The Album” (appendix 1) and “A Long Walk Home” (appendix 2) —are exploited in the following sub sections. The first story is employed for teaching listening and speaking while the second one is for reading and writing. Each of the lessons is planned to be implemented in individual 90 minutes class; that means, four different lessons would be covered in four different classes so that both the teacher and the students get sufficient time to engage with language teaching and learning using the literary text thoroughly. However, all the lessons include a series of student centered language activities that intend to reduce teacher talking time and increase student talking time.

#### **4.1 Listening**

The listening lesson, which aims to develop students’ listening ability by exploiting literary text as tool, includes loud chain reading of the story “The Album” (appendix 1) as core listening activity. Pardede (2011, p. 22) believes that the particular listening task is apt and extremely beneficial for developing listening skill (alongside speaking). Importantly, the chain reading is to be followed by one more listening activity, which is listening to peer-presentation. Prior to the listening class the teacher would modify the original story by bringing some factual changes, such as altering the names of characters, the place and timing of particular happening and the like, without affecting any other aspect of the story. In the class, the teacher at the very beginning would let students know that he/she is going to tell them a story that is slightly modified from the story’s actual version in terms of factual information. The teacher would simultaneously instruct students to listen to him/her minutely as they have to remember the teacher’s modified version of the story and compare that with the actual version (which they would get next) to identify the factual differences between the two. After instructing so, the teacher would narrate the modified story and students would listen attentively. As he/she finishes narrating, the teacher would provide students the original text of the story and ask them to do chain reading (which has to be loud enough so that while one reads his/her portion others can listen).

In the chain reading task, student sitting at the extreme left or right corner starts reading a text and stops after reading a certain number of sentences [or paragraphs in case of longer texts], as per the teacher's instruction. Then, the next student takes over right from where the former ends. The second student also reads a certain number of sentences or paragraph[s] accorded by the teacher. Afterwards, the third student begins and reads the next few. Thus, the activity moves ahead and finishes when the reading chain is completed with the last student's reading of the remaining set of sentences or paragraph[s]. However, before students start the activity everyone would be instructed to pay careful attention to others' reading since the teacher might stop a student at any point of reading and ask the next to start from where the former ended; in fact, the teacher can make them alert of the fact that any form of lapse in concentration in listening on the part of a single student would mean the entire reading chain collapse.

After students get to know the actual story through chain reading, the teacher would ask everyone to jot down the factual mismatches between the modified version and the actual version of the story "The Album" (appendix 1) and then to present that individually in front of the whole class. Notably, while the presentation would go on, all students once again have to pay minute attention to every presentation because in the following class they would need to submit a written report on each presenter's findings. In this manner, the repeated exposure to various listening activities, instrumented by short story, would eventually acclimatize learners to the task of listening.

## **4.2 Speaking**

The fundamental objective of the speaking lesson is to make learners communicate on the basis of the short story "The Album" (appendix 1). For the purpose, role play is selected as relevant speaking task and the lesson is designed adopting Richards' concept of talk as interaction—one of the three types of speaking (the remaining two types are talk as transaction and talk as performance) (2008, p. 22). Talk as interaction refers to "what we normally mean by 'conversation' and describes interaction that serves a primarily social function" (ibid.). In this kind of talk the focus is more on the speakers and how they wish to present themselves to each other than on the message. In real life talk as interaction takes place when people meet together



and exchange greetings, recount experiences as they wish to be friendly and want to establish a comfortable zone of interaction with others (Richards, 2008).

At the beginning of the speaking class the teacher would ask students to form groups of five members; thus a class, for say, of 20 students would have four groups in total. After forming groups students would be asked to reform the short story “The Album” in around 15 minutes through discussing in group. At this stage the teacher would also let students know that each group has to act out its reformed version of the story through role play in the later part of the class. Therefore, each group would be suggested to retain the central five characters—Zhmyhov, Kraterov, Olya, Kolya, Mother— and reconstruct the story in such a way that it becomes presentable through role play in approximately 15 minutes. While students do the group discussion, the teacher would visit all the groups to check whether they are on right track or not and would provide necessary guidelines. As the discussion session ends, every group would rehearse its recreated stories inside the classroom for about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, the teacher would strictly monitor the groups to control unwanted noise and chaos produced during rehearsal; he/she would also notice whether all members within each group communicate or not. The teacher would, in fact, carry on such monitoring activity throughout the role play session. However, with the end of the rehearsal session each group would get into the role play activity to act out its reconstructed version of the short story. The teacher can provide feedback to groups, rather than to individuals, regarding the appropriateness of communication. This kind of feedback will save those students, who fail to communicate appropriately, from being demotivated due to direct criticisms. Thus, the role play task, based on the selected short story, would help students speak up and communicate freely.

### **4.3 Reading**

The reading lesson designed here is primarily concerned with building up students’ stock of vocabulary, utilizing the short story “A Long Walk Home” (appendix 2) as resource, because vocabulary is considered to be the most important element within a language (McCarthy, 1990, p. 8). An overwhelming majority of meaning is conveyed lexically, therefore, regardless of how well a student learns grammar or successfully masters the sounds of foreign language,

communication cannot happen in any meaningful way without words to express a wide range of meaning (ibid.).

The reading class would start with the teacher's instruction to students to form pairs as they have to read the short story "A Long Walk Home" in pair. As students pair up, the teacher would provide them with the text and give around 25 minutes to read and discuss in pair the contextual meaning as well as the parts of speech of the words underlined in the story (see appendix 2). While students do the pair work the teacher would mainly invigilate them, but would offer occasional assistance if students pursue. After students finish reading and discussing, the teacher would ask everyone to individually write down the context based meaning of words underlined in the text. This particular activity would solely test students' reading skill since they have to provide the meaning that is pertinent to the story's context. A particular word may have multiple meanings but only the context specific one would be accepted in this case. However, as students finish the task, the teacher would ask them to exchange scripts with their paired partner and would provide the appropriate meanings of words either orally or through OHP/multimedia power point (resting on availability). Students would do peer checking, i.e. checking one another's script, to provide feedback to the partner. Afterwards, the teacher would ask students to write down the words on the board that they still do not understand (this might also include words not underlined in the text). As the unknown words are listed on the board the teacher would give the floor to students for open class discussion. Students who already know the meaning of word[s] on the board can contribute by extrapolating in front of the class. The teacher would intervene only when he/she feels further explanation or clarification is required. Given that there is more time left in the class, the teacher can ask students to individually fill up the word form chart below, which he/she would provide them in the form of a worksheet.

Feedback can be similarly provided through peer checking which would be followed by an open class discussion.

Complete the word form chart below. Remember that some words do not have all forms. The first word is done for you.

Verb	Adverb	Noun	Adjective
—	Patiently	Patience	Patient
		Immersed	
Apologize			
	Feebly		
Confess			
		Tardiness	
	Intently		
Contemplate			
		Protest	
Plead			
Ignore			
		Distressing	

Both the reading tasks above would help learners learn more vocabulary along with the category of parts of speech they belong to; and in this way the short story “A Long Walk Home” would aid students’ reading skill.

#### 4.4 Writing

The goal of the very writing lesson is to help students practice creative writing by letting them associate their relevant life experience with the short story “A Long Walk Home” (appendix 2). The activity is designed in accordance with Carter and Long’s (1991) Personal growth model that bridges learners’ personal experience[s] with literary texts to engage them in language learning (ibid.). However, so far as beginning the writing is concerned, Khan (2012, p. 58) suggests that one should start practicing writing identifying his/her audience first, as it helps the writer with decisions about the tone, the choice of language, and the structure of writing. In the writing class, before learners step into actual writing, the teacher at the very beginning would ask students to form pair with the partner they paired up in the reading class. Then, they

would be instructed to think of and share with their partner an experience of their life which is somewhat similar to the story “A Long Walk Home” they encountered in the reading class.

Those who do not have a similar experience can relate any from which they learned something very new. It is important to note that since students have to share their personal information with partners, pairing up with a student already known to some extent (through the pair activity in reading class) should help in sharing more freely; this might consequent in a rich piece of writing full of varied insights and perspectives. Nonetheless, after discussing for about 15 minutes in pair, each student would be asked to consider his/her partner as the audience for whom he/she has to write down the life experience, reminded and discussed a while earlier, in the form of a narrative account which has to be followed by revision. The writing style has to be creative and students would be instructed to follow the short story “A Long Walk Home” (appendix 1) as a sample of creative writing. Students would write individually for about 50 to 60 minutes while the teacher would monitor each of them. As students complete writing and revising, they would be asked to exchange scripts with their partner for having and providing peer feedback. Importantly, the teacher would let students know that in doing peer evaluation more attention ought to be paid to content than to other aspect of writing such as grammar, since creative writing does not generally demand the grammatical accuracy as much as academic writing does.

Afterwards, if some extra time remains in the class, the teacher can provide students the following open ended questions from the story “A Long Walk Home” to answer in 100-130 words. In this case too, feedback can be provided through peer evaluation.

Think about the following questions and answer in not more than 100-130 words. Do not attempt to look for answers from the text as they do not exist directly.

1. Do you think Jackson did the right thing hiding his movie watching fact from his father? Give reasons for your answer.
2. What could Jackson do alternatively?
3. Why do you think Jackson’s father decided to walk for 18 miles?

4. What might be the reason[s] for Jackson not to tell a lie to his father since the happening?

The two writing activities— open ended question answering and creative writing— based on the particular short story would inevitably require learners to think, create, and write on their own without providing any chance to copy from the text. Most importantly, throughout the writing session the short story would act as a guide to lead student writers forward and consequently nurture their writing talent.

## **5. Pragmatic limitations of literature as language teaching material**

The review of literature in the introductory section and the lesson plan discussed above may give one the impression that literature is a foolproof material that can be incorporated in language teaching without any question. In reality, like any other piece of authentic material, literary texts mark a couple of crucial pragmatic constraints for why, perhaps, despite having so many significant aspects literature is not seen to be used overwhelmingly in language classes. To speak of the first challenge, the vastness of literature can often push a teacher to the terrain of uncertainty in selecting literary text that is appropriate for particular teaching context and particular level of learners. Both the experienced teachers and the novice ones can struggle in this respect because even a systematic search to find out an apt piece of literature, to be used as language teaching material, demands considerable time, patience, and energy on the part of a teacher.

Prior to selecting any textual material for language teaching, it is essential and obligatory for the teacher to read and get idea about its content. The length of literary genres such as novel, drama, fiction, and so forth, which are usually quite long, renders it almost impossible for any teacher to read a number of such texts and select one within a short period. In fact, there are many short stories as well as poems which are lengthy enough to pose similar challenge to a language teacher.

Secondly, literary discourse may be a testament to artistic display of creative language, but that barely prepares language learners for their academic and career causes. Literary texts teach students neither the academic English nor the English required for professional and

business communication. For instance, if a student wants to learn how to write an application or CV, it is really difficult (perhaps impossible) to find a literary piece that can teach him/her the mentioned writing items. Therefore, employment of literature in language teaching and learning would mean the production of learners who are pragmatically incompetent for the competitive academia and job field.

## 6. Conclusion and Suggestions

The discussion so far suggests that alike other authentic language teaching materials literature has its own set of potentials and challenges. On the one hand, its ability to weave an individual's personal life, cultural life, and language in the same thread always provides literature a different dimension to prove it exceptional amongst the whole array of authentic materials; on the other hand, the pragmatic constraints of literary texts are something worthy to be concerned about. Therefore, it seems sensible enough to use literature selectively for the purpose of language teaching, instead of grossly rejecting or embracing it. When teachers would feel the necessity of integrating language teaching with various meta-linguistic phenomena of human world, such as social, cultural, political, and experiential, literature can then be incorporated in language pedagogy to exploit all its linguistic and meta-linguistic essence. Concretely speaking, in an entire course of language teaching at best four classes can be allotted to teach four different skills of language through literature, as is done in the particular lesson plan I have designed here using two short stories. The suggested language tasks in this study extract both the language and the experiential phenomena of human life from the two stories to teach language in the specific context of private universities; and I feel this paves the way for further concept based studies to design language lessons using short stories for other teaching contexts such as the public schools, colleges, universities, and the madrasas (the Islamic religion based educational institutions) in EFL setting. In fact, there remains scope for action research as well to check the implementability of language activities like the ones recommended in this paper.

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**Appendix 1**  
**The Album**  
**Anton Chekhov**

Kraterov, the titular councillor, stepped forward and, addressing Zhmyhov, said:

"Your Excellency! Moved and touched to the bottom of our hearts by the way you have ruled us during the course of more than ten years, we, your subordinates, on this so memorable day for us, beg your Excellency to accept in token of our respect and profound gratitude this album with our portraits in it, and express our hope that for the duration of your distinguished life, that for long, long years to come, to your dying day you may not abandon us. . . ."

A tear trickled down the wrinkled left cheek of Zhmyhov.

"Gentlemen!" he said in a shaking voice, "I did not expect, I had no idea that you were going to celebrate my modest jubilee. . . . I am touched indeed . . . very much so. . . . I shall not forget this moment to my dying day, and believe me . . . believe me, friends, that no one is so desirous of your welfare as I am . . . and if there has been anything . . . it was for your benefit."

Zhmyhov, the actual civil councilor, kissed the titular councilor Kraterov, who had not expected such an honor, and turned pale with delight. Then the chief made a gesture that signified that he could not speak for emotion, and shed tears as though an expensive album had not been presented to him, but on the contrary, taken from him. . . . Then when he had a little recovered and said a few more words full of feeling and given everyone his hand to shake, he went downstairs amid loud and joyful cheers, got into his carriage and drove off, followed by their blessings. As he sat in his carriage he was aware of a flood of joyous feelings such as he had never known before, and once more he shed tears.

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At home new delights awaited him. There his family, his friends, and acquaintances had prepared him such an ovation that it seemed to him that he really had been of very great service to his country, and that if he had never existed his country would perhaps have been in a very bad way. The jubilee dinner was made up of toasts, speeches, and tears. In short, Zhmyhov had never expected that his merits would be so warmly appreciated.

"Gentlemen!" he said before the dessert, "two hours ago I was recompensed for all the sufferings a man has to undergo who is the servant, so to say, not of routine, not of the letter, but of duty! Through the whole duration of my service I have constantly adhered to the principle;-- the public does not exist for us, but we for the public, and to-day I received the highest reward! My subordinates presented me with an album . . . see! I was touched."

Festive faces bent over the album and began examining it.

"It's a pretty album," said Zhmyhov's daughter Olya, "it must have cost fifty roubles, I do believe. Oh, it's charming! You must give me the album, papa, do you hear? I'll take care of it, it's so pretty."

After dinner Olya carried off the album to her room and shut it up in her table drawer. Next day she took the clerks out of it, flung them on the floor, and put her school friends in their place.

The government uniforms made way for white pelerines. Kolya, his Excellency's little son, picked up the clerks and painted their clothes red. Those who had no moustaches he presented with green moustaches and added brown beards to the beardless. When there was nothing left to paint he cut the little men out of the card-board, pricked their eyes with a pin, and began playing soldiers with them. After cutting out the titular councilor Kraterov, he fixed him on a match-box and carried him in that state to his father's study.

"Papa, a monument, look!"

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Zhmyhov burst out laughing, lurched forward, and, looking tenderly at the child, gave him a warm kiss on the cheek.

"There, you rogue, go and show mamma; let mamma look too."

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**Appendix 2**  
**A Long Walk Home**  
**Jason Bocarro**

I grew up in the south of Spain in a little community called Estepona. I was 16 when one morning my father told me I could drive him into a remote village called Mijas, about 18 miles away, on the condition that I take the car in to be serviced at a nearby garage. Having just learned to drive and hardly ever having the opportunity to use the car, I readily accepted. I drove Dad into Mijas and promised to pick him up at 4 p.m., then drove to a nearby garage and dropped off the car. Because I had a few hours to spare, I decided to catch a couple of movies at a theatre near the garage. However, I became so immersed in the films that I completely lost track of time. When the last movie had finished, I looked down at my watch. It was six o'clock. I was two hours late.

I knew Dad would be angry if he found out I'd been watching movies. He'd never let me drive again. I decided to tell him that the car needed some repairs and that they had taken longer than had been expected. I drove up to the place where we had planned to meet and saw Dad waiting patiently on the corner. I apologized for being late and told him that I'd come as quickly as I could, but the car had needed some major repairs. I'll never forget the look he gave me.

"I'm disappointed that you feel you have to lie to me, Jackson."

"What do you mean? I'm telling the truth."

Dad looked at me again. "When you did not show up, I called the garage to ask if there were any problems, and they told me that you had not yet picked up the car. So you see, I know there were no problems with the car." A rush of guilt ran through me as I feebly confessed to my trip to the movie theater and the real reason for my tardiness. Dad listened intently as a sadness passed through him.

"I am angry, not with you but with myself. You see, I realize that I have failed as a father if after all these years you feel that you have to lie to me. I have failed because I have brought up a son who cannot even tell the truth to his own father, I'm going to walk home now and contemplate where I have gone wrong all these years".

"But Dad, its 18 miles to home. It's dark. You can't walk home."

My protests, my apologies and the rest of my utterances were useless. I had let my father down, and I was about to learn one of the most painful lessons of my life. Dad began walking along the dusty roads. I quickly jumped in the car and followed behind, hoping he would relent. I pleaded all the way, telling him how sorry I was, but he simply ignored me, continuing on silently, thoughtfully and painfully. For 18 miles I drove behind him, averaging about five miles per hour. Seeing my father in so much physical and emotional pain was the most distressing and painful experience that I have ever faced. However, it was also the most successful lesson. I have never lied to him since.

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# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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## Comparison of Heart Rate at Moderate Work Between Regular and Occasional Participants in Sports

Dr. Subhabrata Kar

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### Abstract

The heart is a muscular organ that is the connection between the pulmonary and systemic circulatory systems. The heart produces contractile force that moves blood around the body. The primary mechanisms for an increase in heart rate with exercise are related to neural and hormonal control. At the onset of exercise the parasympathetic neural activity is reduced and this alone will result in an increase in heart rate. Subsequently, sympathetic neural drive is increased and this will also increase heart rate.

The Purpose of this Study is to compare the resting heart rate between regular and occasional male participants by comparing the peak heart rate between regular and occasional

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male participants and by comparing the recovery heart rate between regular and occasional male participants. Here the regular participants means the person who participate some specific physical exercise regularly for developing physical fitness and the person who does not participate in a specific physical exercise regularly is called an occasional participant. The subjects for this study were selected from Manindra Chandra Vidyapith, Berhampore, Murshidabad, West Bengal. The fifteen regular and fifteen occasional participants (boys) between the age of 14–15 years, were selected randomly for this study.

Here, resting heart rates were recorded by Palpation Method from carotid artery following a complete resting condition for at least half-an-hour for each subject, peak heart rate was measured after 5 minutes of stepping up on the selected bench peak heart rate was recorded for carotid artery. The cadence was set at 24 / minutes as well as recovery heart rate was measured after 5 minutes of stepping-up recovery heart rates recorded at an interval of 1 – 1.5 min., 2 – 2.5 min., 3 – 3.5 min., 5 – 5.5 min. and 10 – 10.5 min. respectively. After collecting the data, they were analysed through statistical manipulation. Table–3 shows ANOVA of different states of Heart Rate. The ‘F’ values obtained are 68.28 for regular participants and 161.43 for occasional participants which are significant at 0.05 level.

The mean resting heart rate of occasional participation group is significantly higher than the regular participation group. The mean peak heart rate following exercise of regular participation group is significantly lower than the occasional participation groups. The mean recovery heart rate after exercise of regular participation group is significantly lower than the occasional participation groups.

**Key words: Heart Rate, Moderate work, Regular sports participants, Occasional sports participants.**

## **1. Introduction**

The heart is a muscular organ that is the connection between the pulmonary and systemic circulatory systems. The heart produces contractile force that moves blood around the body.

Heart rate is the number of times the heart beats in a minute. The American Heart  
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Association suggests that the normal range should be 50 to 100 beats per minute.

Heart rate increases in a linear fashion with oxygen consumption to the point where oxygen uptake reaches a peak or maximal value. We can predict this through a simple and common equation where, Maximal Heart Rate =  $220 - \text{Age}$ .

The primary mechanisms for an increase in heart rate with exercise are related to neural and hormonal control. At the onset of exercise the parasympathetic neural activity is reduced and this alone will result in an increase in heart rate. Subsequently, sympathetic neural drive is increased and this will also increase heart rate. Adrenaline will also cause the heart rate to rise. The fact that the heart rate is increased during exercise is a matter of common observation. The maximal heart rate reached during exercise and the rapidity with which the maximal value is attained vary with a number of factors, including the type of exercise, the emotional content of the exercise, environmental condition and physical condition of the subject. The Purpose of the Study is to compare the resting heart rate between regular and occasional male participants by comparing the peak heart rate between regular and occasional male participants and by comparing the recovery heart rate between regular and occasional male participants. Here the regular participants means the person who participate some specific physical exercise regularly for developing physical fitness and the person who does not participate in a specific physical exercise regularly is called an occasional participant.

## **2. Methods**

Methodology is a process by which the programs are initiated and carried out. In this chapter the subjects criterion measures, the design and the procedure for administering tests for the study are described.

### **2.1 The Subjects**

The subjects for this study were selected from Manindra Chandra Vidyapith, Berhampore, Murshidabad, West Bengal. The fifteen regular and fifteen occasional participants (boys) between the age of 14–15 years, were selected randomly for this study.

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## 2.2 Criteria Measure

**a. Resting Heart Rate :** Resting heart rates were recorded by Palpation Method from carotid artery following a complete resting condition for at least half-an-hour for each subject.

**b. Peak Heart Rate :** After 5 minutes of stepping up on the selected bench peak heart rate was recorded for carotid artery. The cadence was set at 24 / minutes.

**c. Recovery Heart Rate :** After 5 minutes of stepping-up recovery heart rates recorded at an interval of 1 – 1.5 min., 2 – 2.5 min., 3 – 3.5 min., 5 – 5.5 min. and 10 – 10.5 min. respectively.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The mean and standard deviation of age, height and weight of regular and occasional participants have been presented in Table – 1.

**Table – 1. Personal Data : Mean and Standard Deviation of Age, Height, Weight of Regular and Occasional Participants (Boys)**

Variables	Regular Participants		Occasional Participants	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Age	14.50	± 0.39	14.59	± 0.34
Height	159.33	± 7.03	161	± 4.06
Weight	45.34	± 5.3	46.33	± 7.5

**Table – 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Selected Variables of Regular Participants and Occasional Participants Group**

Variables	Regular Participants		Occasional Participants	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Resting Heart Rate	63.80	± 3.47	77.33	± 5.38
Peak Heart Rate	136.53	± 12.55	153.53	± 10.45
Recovery 1	98.40	± 12.88	124.40	± 7.57
Recovery 2	92.27	± 12.40	116.27	± 7.44
Recovery 3	87.53	± 11.24	109.33	± 7.62
Recovery 4	82.33	± 10.39	100.93	± 6.76
Recovery 5	78.13	± 8.77	93.60	± 5.57

It is seen from Table–2 that the mean and standard deviation of regular participant group of R. H. R., P. H. R., R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub> were 63.80 ± 3.47, 136.53 ± 12.55, 98.40 ± 12.88, 92.27 ± 12.40, 87.53 ± 11.24, 82.33 ± 10.39, 78.13 ± 8.77.

Also the mean and standard deviation of occasional participant group of R. H. R., P. H. R., R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub> were 77.33 ± 5.38, 153.53 ± 10.45, 124.40 ± 7.57, 116.27 ± 7.44, 109.33 ± 7.62, 100.93 ± 6.76, 93.60 ± 5.57 and respectively.

After collecting the data, they were analysed through statistical manipulation. Table–3 shows ANOVA of different states of Heart Rate. The ‘F’ values obtained are 68.28 for regular participants and 161.43 for occasional participants which are significant at 0.05 level.

**Table – 3. ANOVA between R. H. R. and P. H. R., R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub> of Regular and Occasional Participation Group**

ANOVA OF HEART RATES					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Regular Participants</b>					
Between Groups	46823.962	6	7803.994	68.28	.000
Within Groups	11201.467	98	114.301		
Total	58025.429	104			
<b>Occasional Participants</b>					



Between Groups	53345.048	6	8890.841	161.43	.000
Within Groups	5397.467	98	55.076		
Total	58742.514	104			

**Table – 4. Comparison of Means between R. H. R. and P. H. R., R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub> of Regular and Occasional Participation Group**

Group (I)	Group (J)	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.
		R. P.		O. P.	
RHR	PHR	-72.73**	0.000	- 76.20**	0.000
	R <sub>1</sub>	- 34.69**	0.000	- 47.07**	0.000
	R <sub>2</sub>	- 28.47**	0.000	- 38.93**	0.000
	R <sub>3</sub>	- 23.73**	0.000	- 32.00**	0.000
	R <sub>4</sub>	- 18.53**	0.000	- 23.60**	0.000
	R <sub>5</sub>	- 14.33**	0.000	-16.27**	0.000

\*\* Sig. at 0.01 level

Table –4 shows a comparative account of different states of Heart Rate. The table shows significant difference of Resting Heart Rate, Peak Heart Rate, Recovery Heart Rate during 1 – 1½ min., 2 – 2½ min., 3 – 3½ min, 5 – 5½ min and 10 – 10½ min. after exercise.

**Table – 5. Comparison of Means between P. H. R. and R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub> of Regular and Occasional Participation Group**

Group (I)	Group (J)	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.
		R. P.		O. P.	
RHR	R <sub>1</sub>	38.13 **	0.000	29.13**	0.000
	R <sub>2</sub>	44.27**	0.000	37.27**	0.000
	R <sub>3</sub>	49.00**	0.000	44.20**	0.000
	R <sub>4</sub>	54.20**	0.000	52.60**	0.000
	R <sub>5</sub>	58.40**	0.000	59.93**	0.000

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\*\* Sig. at 0.01 level

Table – 5 shows a comparative account of different states of Heart Rate. The table shows significant difference of Peak Heart Rate, Recovery Heart Rate during 1 – 1½ min., 2 – 2½ min., 3 – 3½ min, 5 – 5½ min and 10 – 10½ min. after exercise.

**Table – 6. Comparison of Means between Recovery<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub> of Regular and Occasional Participation Group**

Group (I)	Group (J)	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.
		R. P.		O. P.	
RHR	R <sub>2</sub>	6.13	0.119	8.13**	0.003
	R <sub>3</sub>	10.87**	0.006	15.07**	0.000
	R <sub>4</sub>	16.07**	0.000	23.47**	0.000
	R <sub>5</sub>	20.27**	0.000	30.80**	0.000

\*\* Sig. at 0.01 level

Table – 6 shows a comparative account of different states of Heart Rate. The table shows significant difference of Recovery<sub>1</sub> with Recovery Heart Rate during 2 – 2½ min., 3 – 3½ min, 5 – 5½ min and 10 – 10½ min. after exercise.

**Table – 7. Comparison of Means between Recovery<sub>2</sub> and R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub> of Regular and Occasional Participation Group**

Group (I)	Group (J)	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.
		R. P.		O. P.	
RHR	R <sub>3</sub>	4.73	0.228	6.93**	0.012
	R <sub>4</sub>	9.93*	0.013	15.33**	0.000
	R <sub>5</sub>	14.13**	0.000	22.67**	0.000

\*\* Sig. at 0.01 level, \*Sig. at 0.05 level

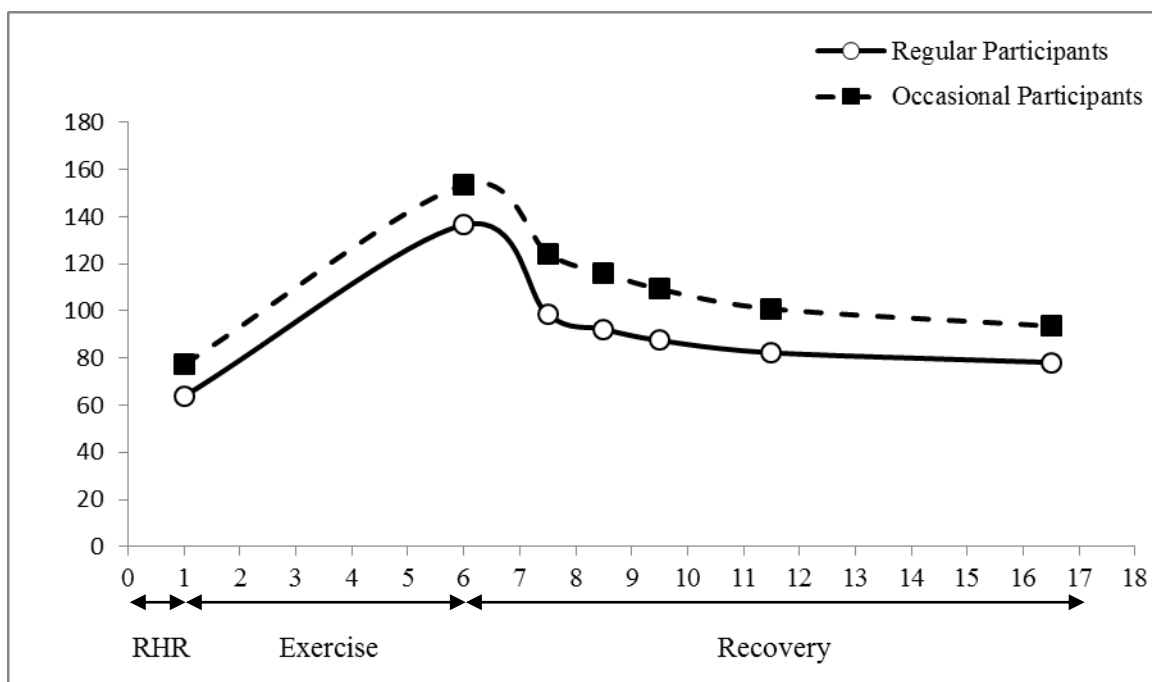
Table – 7 shows a comparative account of different states of Heart Rate. The table shows significant difference of Recovery<sub>2</sub> with Recovery Heart Rate during 3 – 3½ min, 5 – 5½ min and 10 – 10½ min. after exercise.

**Table – 8. Comparison of Means between Recovery<sub>3</sub> and R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub> and Recovery<sub>4</sub> with R<sub>5</sub> of Regular Occasional Participation Group**

Group (I)	Group (J)	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.	Mean Difference (I – J)	Sig.
		R. P.		O. P.	
RHR	R <sub>3</sub>	5.20*	0.186	8.40**	0.003
	R <sub>4</sub>	9.40*	0.018	15.73**	0.000
	R <sub>5</sub>	4.20	0.285	7.33**	0.008

\*\* Sig. at 0.01 level, \*Sig. at 0.05 level

Table – 8 shows a comparative account of different states of Heart Rate. The table shows significant difference of Recovery<sub>3</sub> with R<sub>4</sub>, R<sub>5</sub> and Recovery<sub>4</sub> with R<sub>5</sub>.



**Fig. 1. Pattern of Heart Rate at pre and post exercise and recovery period following sub-maximal work**

Thus, from Fig. 1 it is evident that the heart rate before exercise is increased after sub-maximal work through step test. At the same time because of O<sub>2</sub> debt during recovery from exercise. The frequency of heart beat is gradually slowed down and after 10 minutes the heart rate reaches to its basal level.

#### 4. Conclusion

The mean resting heart rate of occasional participation group are significantly higher than the regular participation group. The mean peak heart rate following exercise of regular participation group is significantly lower than the occasional participation groups. The mean recovery heart rate after exercise of regular participation group is significantly lower than the occasional participation groups.

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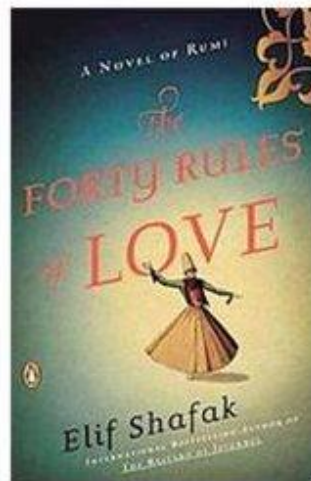
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## *Forty Rules of Love as a Bildungsroman*

Sumaya Firdous, Ph.D. Scholar

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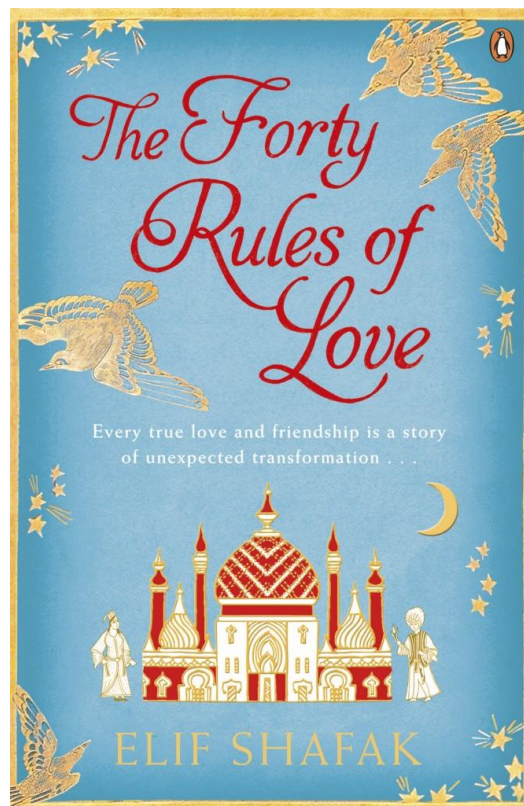
Sumaya Firdous, Ph.D.

*Forty Rules of Love as a Bildungsroman*

## Abstract

A particularly impressive ‘novel of formation’ by Turkish writer Elif Shafak, *The Forty Rules of Love* follows the parallel life paths of Rumi and Shams Tabrez, a famous pair in the thirteenth century vis-à-vis Ella - a Massachusetts house wife with her first editing job and Aziz Zahara, whose globe-trotting book she is reading. The novel tells the story of Rumi and Shams through the eyes of the characters around.

The novel is a perfect Bildungsroman as also a complete study in opposites—discipline versus spontaneity, reason versus love, perspective versus acceptance, wisdom versus youth, foundation versus risk and brain versus heart. While the novel argues strongly in favour of heart, love, acceptance and spontaneity, it also favours a balance between the two extremes and that is what matters the most. However, this balance could be achieved only by adhering to the basic Sufi principles.



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The novel clearly gives a frank treatment of the dangers of the spiritual path. One can hardly ignore appreciating this ‘novel of education’ in its honest and direct treatment of that place, people, era and the deep confusion and pain it can bring to the seeker and those close to them and of course that beauty and wisdom that come from that difficult experience. The novel displays an elegant language to intercept the effect that these parallel soul mates - Rumi and Shams, Ella and Aziz—had on each other and that is what forms the essence of this novel.

### **Sufism and Elif Shafak**



Elif Shafak

Courtesy: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elif\\_%C5%9Eafak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elif_%C5%9Eafak)

Elif Shafak, the famous Turkish writer has always been greatly influenced by the tenets of Sufism and as such, it is natural that Sufi thoughts and principles should figure directly in her novels. This bond with Sufism has further intensified over the years. Be it her first novel in Turkish, *Pinhan* or *The Bastard of Istanbul* or *The Forty Rules of Love*—all stand a testimony to the author’s deep penchant for the Sufi way of life. Sufism is close to the author’s heart. The novel discusses the ancient philosophy at length which becomes instrumental in changing the life of Ella, a contemporary American housewife. And yet, it is one of the best seller books throughout, equally popular among the young and the old alike.

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## **Main Character Ella**

The apparent reason for this seeming dichotomy is that the main character passes through the spiritual growth. The author portrays the character of Ella as an immature and emotionally lost woman who goes out into the world to seek knowledge. It is not the knowledge which can be gained by senses, reason, logic or even books. Logic never goes beyond the philosophy and book learner fosters self-conceit of empty words. This knowledge comes by illumination, revelation and inspiration. Ordinary knowledge is denoted by the term *ilm* and the mystic knowledge peculiar to Sufis is called *ma'rifat* or *irfan*. *Ma'rifat* is different from *ilm*, and a different word must be used to translate it. The *ma'rifat* of the Sufis is the “gnosis” of Hellenistic theosophy that is direct knowledge of God based on revelation or apocalyptic vision. It is not the result of any mental process, but depends entirely on the will and favour of God, who bestows it as a gift from Himself upon those whom He has created with the capacity of receiving it. It is a light of divine grace that flashes into the heart and overwhelms every human faculty with its dazzling beams. (Nicholson, 1914. 51)

## ***The Forty Rules of Love* – Focus on Mystic Subjects**

*The Forty Rules of Love* (2010) is one of the famous and most read novels by Shafak. Relying upon mystic subjects, the writer tells the stories of Rumi and Shams Tabrez of 13<sup>th</sup> century on the one hand; and Ella and Aziz of contemporary times, on the other, thus highlighting the relevance of medieval philosophy and values in the present times. The way Shafak uses the historical characters of Rumi and Shams Tabrez to make Ella draw some really positive conclusions, form the core of the novel. Both sets of characters share some striking parallels even if they belong to two different centuries. Thus, in analyzing this novel as a Bildungsroman, it is important to note how Ella, a middle-aged housewife from Massachusetts changes and develops, having been impressed by the thirteenth century philosophy, which somehow seems to be unlikely in the modern century; and how she meets with her own self by opening up to love.

## **Focus on the Maturity of the Protagonist**

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Sumaya Firdous, Ph.D.

*Forty Rules of Love* as a Bildungsroman

In a Bildungsroman, the main motive is the maturity of the protagonist; it can be a psychological growth of the protagonist in which he/she goes through internal journey and tries to find the meaning of life. It provides an opportunity to the protagonist to rediscover equality in the society which is based on love.

The growth of Ella's character is largely based on her reading the novel *Sweet Blasphemy*. Ella, an unhappy married woman, finds herself caught in the rut of dull household routine. Her teenage children are now growing away from her, in their own paths. She feels that they do not need her as much as they once did. Her husband, a successful dentist, is unfaithful to her. He deceives her by spending nights with other women. Ella is aware of her husband's mistresses, but finding no way out, she has become compromised to her life. As a result, both of them live under the same roof as strangers and are uncomfortable in each other's presence. Throughout her married life, Ella has longed for love – something with which she could hold on to the relationship; and something which has been conspicuously missing in their conjugal life. Ironically, the relationship is based on just a physical need and to beget children for their family. While arguing with her daughter, Jeannette, who claims to be in love with a guy, Scott, and wants to marry him, Ella perhaps gives vent to the frustration in her own life: "... which century are you living in? Just get it in your head, women do not marry the men they fall in love with. They choose a guy who will be a good father and reliable husband. Love is only a sweet feeling bound to come and quickly to go away." (Shafak, 2010. 14)

### **Ella's Life**

Ella realizes that she has enough spare time and there is no good company that could take away the boredom of her life. In order to remain busy and divert her attention from the sordid realities of her life, she seeks a job. As she has been a voracious reader, she finally manages to get the job through one of her husband's relations. Ella's job as a reader for a literary agent introduces her to Sufism through a manuscript *Sweet Blasphemy* written by some unknown writer, Aziz Zahara, living in Turkey. A note of the writer in the novel, that it is his first novel and most probably his last, captures her imagination. She reads that the writer has no intention of becoming a novelist and has

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written this book purely out of admiration and love for the great philosopher, mystic, and poet Rumi and his beloved sun, Shams Tabrez. (Shafak, 2010. 17) In the beginning, she was not interested in writing the report on *Sweet Blasphemy*. She was not sure whether she could concentrate on a subject that is completely irrelevant to her life and from a time as distant as the thirteenth century. At that time, she could not realize that message of love/ Sufism is beyond the boundaries set by time and space; and therefore, it is acceptable to all times and climes. It has withstood the test of time; it is the religion of love applicable to all types of religions and eras.

### ***Sweet Blasphemy* – Misinterpretation of Love**

*Sweet Blasphemy* provides a glimpse of the world of love and it is the blessed rain which drenches Ella to the core and changes her life completely. On the surface, it is a celebration of the radical transformation of Rumi from scholar to poet, from devoted spiritual man to a visionary and a deeply honest portrayal of every difficult step of that evolution. At a deeper level, however, it marks the physical as well as spiritual transformation in Ella's personality and opens up a world, hitherto unknown to her.

Like modern women, Ella too has misinterpreted the meaning and essence of love. The obvious reason is her way of living life with her family, especially with her husband, David. While reading *Sweet Blasphemy*, Ella comes across some interesting lines which read thus: "For despite what some people say, love is not only a sweet feeling bound to come and quickly go away." (Shafak, 2010. 17) There is clearly a contradiction between what she has experienced and what she has just read. It marks a fundamental change in her life, as if these words were written for her. She shivers with the thought that some mysterious force in this universe, or else this writer, whosoever he might be, was spying on her. Perhaps he had written this book knowing beforehand what kind of person was going to read it first. This writer had her in mind as his reader. For some reason unknown to her, Ella finds the idea both disturbing and exciting.

### **Old is New, New is Old**

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In many ways, the twenty-first century is not that different from the thirteenth century. Both will be recorded in history as times of unprecedented religious clashes, cultural misunderstandings, and a general sense of insecurity and fear of the other. At times like these, the need for love is greater than ever, because love is the very essence and purpose of life. As Rumi reminds us, “It hits everybody, including those who shun love- even those who use the word “romantic” as a sign of disapproval.” Ella was as bowled over as if she had read there, “Love hits everybody, even a middle-aged house wife in Northampton named Ella Rubinstein.” (Shafak, 2010. 17-18) Now, she gets engaged in this novel. Elif Shafak has successfully taken this difficult path of transforming her main character, Ella, through an amazing evolution with craft and skill.

### **Role of Minor Characters**

In *The Forty Rules of Love*, some minor characters such as Desert Rose, Kimya, Husam the student, Sultan Walad, and others also get transformed by the wondrous touch of love. Some characters however, remain the same; they are flat characters. Baybars the warrior, Alladin, Sheikh Yasin could be listed in this category. Here it is interesting to note that the characters that show development and evolvment harbour a spot of love in their heart. They just need some stimulus with which they will react and that stimulus comes in the form of Shams Tabrez. Shams Tabrez, a wandering dervish, challenges the society by his wisdom which has the source of love. He is a full-fledged Sufi and a mature one. Shams said: “Since I was a boy, I had received visions and heard voices. I always talked to God, and He always responded.” (Shafak, 2010. 32) Shams passed through all those stages of Sufism which are rarely faced by a common man. As it is mentioned in the novel, “one becomes a lantern to humanity, radiating energy to everyone who asks for it, teaching and illuminating like a true master. Sometimes such a person has a healing power, wherever he goes, he will make a big difference in their lives. In everything he does and aspires to do, his main goal is to serve God through serving others.” (Shafak, 2010. 110) Shams Tabrez was the embodiment of all these qualities. He lost himself in the love and knowledge of God and disagreed with his father who was insisting that he become a carpenter like himself, because the son follows the

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profession of his father. But Shams Tabrez had mystic-like visions. He said, “I have been a wandering dervish ever since, not sleeping in the same place more than once, not eating out of the same bowl twice in a row... I have seen the worst and best in humanity. Nothing surprises me anymore.” (Shafak, 2010. 32-33) While going through all these experiences, he compiled a list that was not written down in any book, only inscribed in his soul. Together they constituted “The Forty Rules of the Religion of Love” which can be attained always and only through love. He said:

It had taken me years to finish working on these rules, all forty of them. And now that I was done, I knew I was nearing the final stage of my time in this world. There were many words piled up inside my chest, stories waiting to be told. I wanted to hand all this knowledge to one other person, neither a master nor a disciple. I sought an equal – a companion. “God,” I whispered into the dark ...”

“Go to Baghdad,” fluted my guardian angel in a singsong voice.

“What is awaiting me in Baghdad?” I asked.

“You prayed for a companion, and a companion you will be given. In Baghdad you will find a master who will point you to the right direction.” (Shafak, 2010. 33)

### **In Baghdad – Transformation of Rumi**

At Baghdad, he realized that the man in his visions was no other than his spiritual companion (Rumi). In 1244, Rumi met Shams - a wandering dervish with unconventional ways and heretical proclamations. Their encounter altered the lives of both of them. At the same time, it marked the beginning of a solid, unique friendship that Sufis in the centuries to follow likened to the union of two oceans. The whole Sufi community forms one indivisible brotherhood, so that the meanest famulus feels himself to be joined in spirit with the most exalted hierophant (Nicholson, 1992. 71). By meeting this exceptional companion, Rumi was transformed from a mainstream cleric to a committed mystic, passionate poet, advocate of love, and originator of the ecstatic dance of the

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whirling dervishes, daring to break free of all conventional rules. The powerful spiritual bond between Shams and Rumi became the target of rumor, slander, and attack. They were misunderstood, envied, vilified, and ultimately betrayed by those closest to them. Three years after they met, they were tragically separated. But the story did not end there. In truth, there never was an end. Almost eight hundred years later, the spirits of Shams and Rumi are still alive today, whirling amid us somewhere. (Shafak, 2010. 21)

### **Significance of *Forty***

The number 'forty' too has a significance which we get through the e-mail of Aziz when Ella told him about her birthday and has reached a milestone; she was now at the age of forty. Aziz gave the importance of 'forty'; "In mysticism, forty symbolizes the ascent from one lower level to a higher one and spiritual awakening? When a baby is born it takes forty days for him to start a new life on earth. And when we are in love we need to wait for forty days to be sure of our feelings..." (Shafak, 2010. 77)

These forty rules of love inspired Ella and she conceived that her life would be rewritten. These rules were injecting a new flavour of love in her veins. She becomes the incarnation of love at the end of the novel. Eventually, these forty rules were guiding minor characters, whom Shams Tabrez met in one way or the other in the novel. These are the guiding principles for the reader and all of mankind as well.

As she goes on reading it, she realizes that Rumi's story mirrors her own and that Aziz Zahara, like Shams Tabrez, has come to set her free, and guide her to the principles of life. In one of her e-mails, having seen his snap, she asks Aziz, "Are you Shams? Or is it the other way round? Is Shams you?" In reply, Aziz tells her, "Shams is the person who was responsible for the transformation of Rumi from a local cleric to a famous mystic poet. Master Sameed used to say to me, "Even if there might be a Shams equivalent in some people, what matters is, where are the Rumis to see it?" (Shafak, 2010. 126)

### **Rumi and Shams Meet**

In *Sweet Blasphemy*, Rumi and Shams meet at Konya and get closer to one another; similarly Ella and Aziz start sharing their ideas, something that Ella needed desperately. Shams' greatest gift to Rumi, the friend of his life, was the power of intuition and masculinity of language. By forcing Rumi to step outside the confines of learning, he encouraged the poet to experience life as it is, raw and untamed, a rich ferment of desire and anguish needing to be consumed by the purifying fires of love. Similarly, Aziz, through his e-mails, puts the raw and untamed love of Ella into the ferment of love. The relationship proves to be fulfilling for both. While Ella has been looking for a man who could receive and imbibe her emotional set up, Aziz too is lucky to find a woman whom he could shake, destroy, build, regenerate and elevate.

### **Elements of Sufism**

Rumi had a stature, respectable and admirable personality through the whole community and Shams led him beyond the comforts of his respectable way of life, beyond the shallow satisfactions of ego, which is necessary in Sufism. At the end of the part three of the novel, Shams asked Rumi to quench his thirst by fetching the two bottles of wine from the tavern. Shams recalled the face of a novice in Baghdad, who had wanted to accompany him, but cared too much about his reputation to take the plunge. His concern for the opinion of others had held him back.

Now Shams wondered if his reputation was going to hold Rumi back, too. But to Shams's great relief, Rumi got up and nodded, and said to Shams, "I have never been to a tavern before and have never consumed wine. I don't think drinking is a right thing to do. But I trust you fully, because I trust the love between us. There must be a reason you have asked me to do such a thing. I need to find out what that reason is. I will go and buy us wine." (Shafak, 2010. 154)

When Rumi and Shams were in a snow-covered courtyard, Shams asked Rumi to drink the glass of wine. He was about to take the glass to his lips, Shams snatched it back and flung it to the ground. Rumi asked him then why he sent him to the tavern?

Shams replied, “Nothing should stand between yourself and God. Not *imams*, priests, rabbis, or any other custodians of moral or religious leadership. Not spiritual masters, not even your faith. Believe in your values and your rules, but never lord them over others. If you keep breaking other people’s hearts, whatever religious duty you perform is no good.”

Further Shams said that this world is full of people obsessed with wealth, recognition, or power. The more signs of success they earned, the more they seemed to be in need of them. Greedy and covetous, they rendered worldly possessions their *qibla*, always looking in that direction; unaware of becoming the servants of the things they hungered after. That was a common pattern. It happened all the time. But it was rare, as rare as rubies, for a man who had already made his way up, a man who had plenty of gold, fame and authority, to renounce his position all of a sudden one day and endanger his reputation for an inner journey, one that nobody could tell where or how it would end. Rumi was that rare ruby. (Shafak, 2010. 160-161) He had the motto to develop the character of Rumi by the language of love and Rumi being a faithful and responding student followed him, despite the prejudices of society and family. Exchanging e-mails with Aziz made Ella feel that she was somehow breaking away from her staid and tranquil life. From a woman with lots of dull grays and browns in her life’s canvas, she was turning into a woman with a secret colour- a bright, tantalizing red. And she loved it. (Shafak, 2010. 95)

### **Meanings of Bildungsroman**

According to Suzzane Hader, “The term Bildungsroman denotes a novel of all round self-development...A Bildungsroman is, generally, the story of a single individual’s growth and development within the context of a defined social order.” (The Bildungsroman Genre).

In the passage above, Ella clearly struggles to define herself by her own terms. As in Hader’s definition, Ella is searching for a “meaningful existence within a society.” After being far away from her family, she starts a battle towards her maturity. She wants

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to be free from all chains but wants to be entangled in a web of love. She is approaching towards love/ Aziz, who also extends his arms to Ella and the two embrace like Shams and Rumi. Even after knowing about Aziz's life-taking disease, she leaves her family because she is now mature enough and has come to understand what Aziz has been teaching her, 'to live the present moment without fearing future and lamenting past.' Ella finds the independence of which she was craving from a long time.

From the milestone of forty, she again reaches to a zero milestone from where she can start her life's journey afresh and can see the world through the lenses of love. It is that age at which all senses function according to love. When Ella is ready to leave her house, she murmurs one of Shams Tabrez's Forty Rules of Love, "It is never too late to ask yourself, 'Am I ready to change the life I am living? Am I ready to change within?'"

"Even if a single day in your life is same as the day before, it surely is a pity. At every moment with each new breath, one should be renewed and renewed again. There is only one way to be born into a new life: to die before death." (Shafak, 2010. 217)

### **Prism of Love**

The Bildungsroman Ella desires to see the world through the prism of love, and like Eve, the Miltonic archetype of all feminine innocence, she feels greatly curious about life. Francois Jost points out in a study of the Bildungsroman that, "the agent of the bildung is the world," and that the man of the world would therefore appear to be the perfect hero of such a novel." This is precisely the case of the novel *The Forty Rules of Love*. Had Shams not challenged every aspect of the social order Rumi held dear, Rumi would not have learned. Had Rumi not lost Shams, he would not have become a poet. Similarly, had Ella not been able to hold on under pressures and difficulties, she would not have been able to transform herself. Ella as a protagonist of a Bildungsroman leaves the house to make her way independently for the beginning of a new life, at a new place. Earlier, she could not move, surrounded by her children and husband; she now seems to have no difficulty in turning them down just for Aziz, her love. It is true that she has

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learnt and will learn the meaning of life through her sufferings likely other Sufis (Shams Tabrez). After Aziz's death, she goes back to the hotel before leaving for the airport; Ella takes off her jacket and puts on a fluffy, peach coloured angora sweater - "A colour too meek and docile for a woman who is trying to be neither, she thought." Then she calls Jeannette, her only child who had supported her in her decision to follow her heart. When Jeannette asks her what she is going to do now, Ella Closes her eyes for a moment and prophesies to herself with jubilant conviction and confidence what the days ahead would bring her. She has never been on her own like this before, and yet, hardly enough, she doesn't feel lonely. She reminds herself of the rule number forty, "A life without love is of no account. Don't ask yourself what kind of love you should seek, spiritual or material, divine or mundane, Eastern or Western...divisions only lead to more divisions. Love has no labels, no definitions. It is what it is, pure and simple. Love is the water of life. And a lover is a soul of fire! The universe turns differently when fire loves water." (Shafak, 2010. 224-225)

Thus, the growth and development of the protagonist is complete in the sense that she has arrived at a stage wherefrom she can diffidently reject the traditional, myopic lens to judge the individual in her. She becomes herself.

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## Soft Skills for First Generation Students, Teachers and Professionals

M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

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What I list here is based on my own experience as a first generation learner. It was very hard in those days, say sixty or more years ago, for the first generation learners whose parents are illiterates and poor, to go to school and continue and complete the school. Going beyond school to college was hardly ever thought of. Students from non-first generation learners' social groups would make fun of you for the way you wear your clothes, speak your idiolect, and use fingers and palm to eat your lunch, etc. Yet, with determination, one could overcome the hardships, obstacles, prejudice and discrimination. After all, always remember that prejudice and discrimination may never end.

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Soft Skills for First Generation Students, Teachers and Professionals

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- First Generation Learners (FGLs) – Not a new term.
- Once there were only mostly FGLs!
- So, not much attention was given then.
- Now, a political necessity to recognize and help this important segment of population – a delayed, but wise step.

### **Characteristics of FGLs - First Generation Learners**

The following characteristics are generally noticed. However, note that not all First Generation Learners may have all of these or even any of these characteristics.

- Inferiority complex, leading on to lack of participation, unwillingness and hesitation to be part of a group/team, internal conflict, satisfied with low level performance, ultimate defeat and self-destruction, etc. Fatalism.
- Difficulty with appropriate etiquette demanded in “city” contexts, Dress and Table Manners, etc.
- Difficulty with appropriate language.
- Difficulty with appropriate Nonverbal Communication.
- Lack of sensitivity to the context.
- Fear and hesitation. Fuming with internal anger.
- Finding one’s direction in career is hard for the FLGs, especially when they come from little educated or illiterate families.

### **Modern Office and FGLs**

1. Communication via English.
2. Appropriate Dress Code.
3. Appropriate facial expression.
4. Participation in group activities.
5. Keeping appointments on time.
6. Keeping the Desk/Table tidy.

7. Appropriate greetings.
8. Avoidance of body odor.
9. Toilet habits: frequency, cleanliness, etc.
10. Seating posture.
11. Gender relations.
12. Avoidance of hurtful humor, comments and gestures, etc.
13. An Exercise: Prepare an Office, provide scenes, enact a variety of Office Activities.
14. For this visit a variety of offices, both public and private, business, etc.
15. Practice with attention to details helps.
16. Develop sensitivity to context, learn from face and nonverbal expressions.
17. Develop skills in expression through language and non-language means.
18. Remember most of us came originally from FGLs families. Be sympathetic, do not mock at or mimic FGLs. Learn to love others!

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## Discourse Peculiarities of Anita Desai in Her Selected Novels

R. C. Vasuki, Ph.D. English

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### Abstract

Identifying an author's peculiarity on a judgment scale of analytical study of her works is an attempt at recognising and justifying the individual writer's creative originality. This paper focuses on this issue by taking into consideration the works of Anita Desai Cry, the Peacock and Fasting, Feasting.

### Introduction

Discourse analysis develops an insight into how structure of words or words as speech utterances collectively communicate thought. It is the study of language used by members of the

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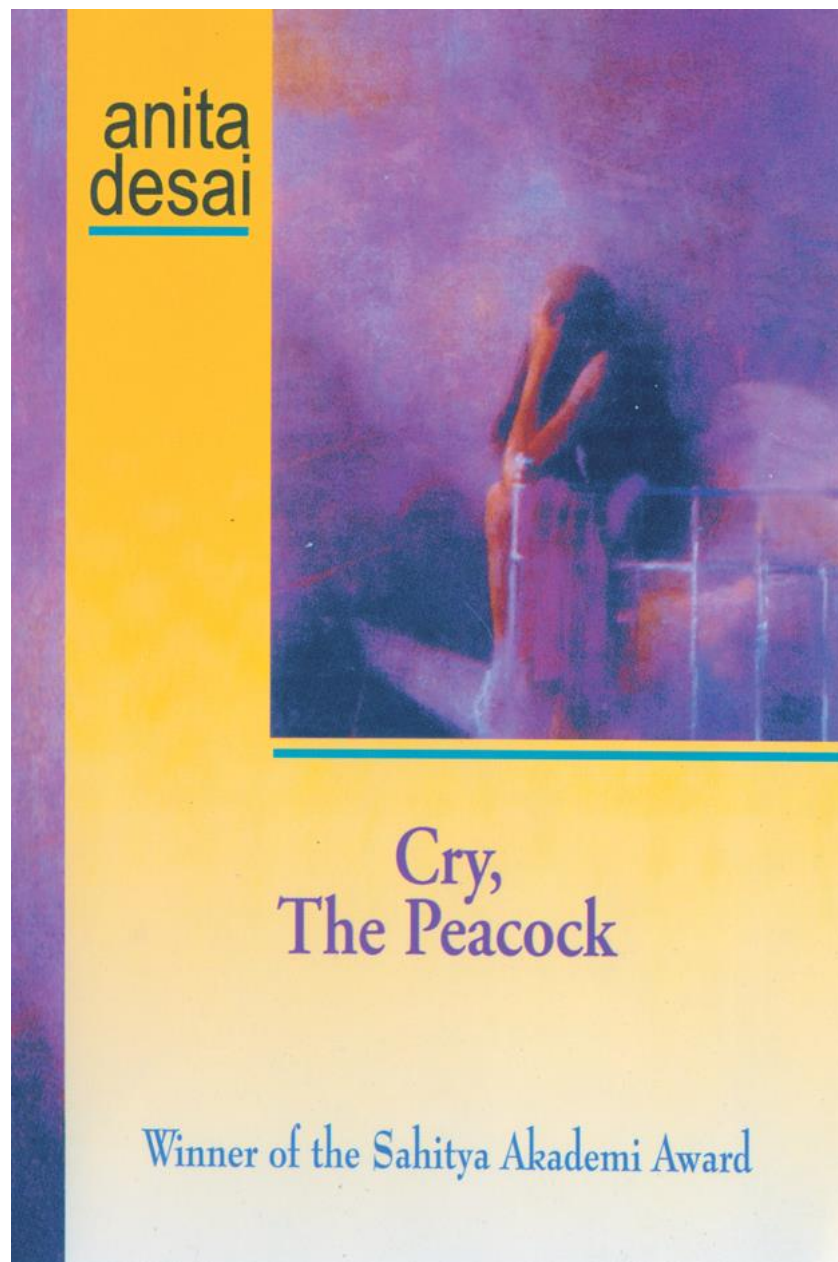
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speech community. It looks at both language form and language functions. It identifies linguistic features that characterize different genres as well as social and cultural factors that aid in our interpretation and understanding of different texts and types of talk. An analysis of written text might include a study of topic development and cohesion across the sentences, while an analysis of spoken language focus on these aspects plus turn taking practices, opening and closing sequences of social encounters or narrative structure.

### Analysis

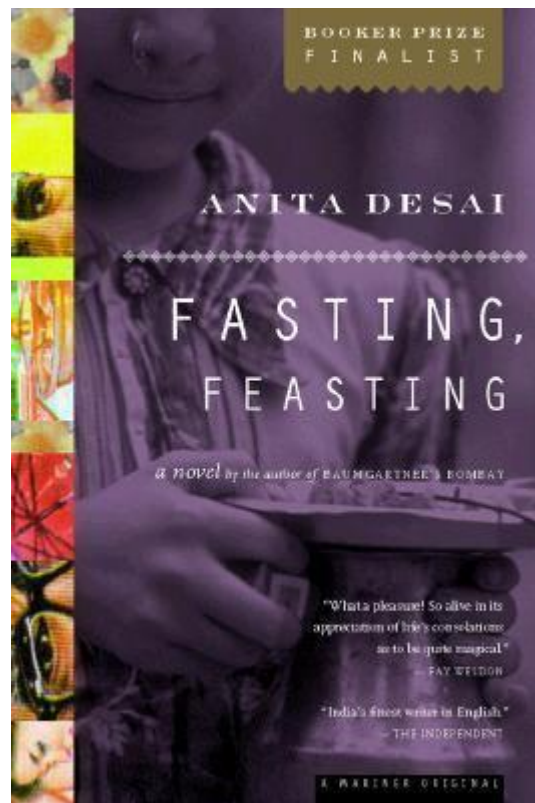


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The works of Anita Desai – *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fasting, Feasting* are taken into consideration for the analytical study. Theme-wise these two novels are conventional stories centering on feminist interests. But form-wise they are the product of the intellect. The technical aspects such as the story, plot, action and character together in these texts are apparently achieved by maneuvering language application.



### **Maya and Uma**

The characters Maya and Uma are representatives of the feminist world, and like them their language also represents realities. Maya's sentimental alterations and Uma's humility provide the direction educated, intelligent women must take if they are to attain equality and dignity in marital life.

### **Discourse Text – A Combination of American and British Literary Traditions**

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Examination of the discourse text in Anita Desai's fiction reveals the truth that the author combines both the American and British literary traditions in her writing technique. As a result, her fiction takes its form and tone from polarities, opposites and irreconcilables. We encounter oddity, distortion of personality, disruption of normal life, recklessness of human conduct, cruelties of nature, morbidity of temperament, and malignancy of motives along with the profound poetry of disorder, radical forms of alienation, maladjustments and contradictions. All these have been captured and observed in the synthetic culture projected in her creative writing technique.

### **Interior Monologues**

The appealing use of conscious flashbacks and interior monologues in her novels enable the writer to capture the prismatic quality of life and an intensified impressionism. A title, as an intrinsic source, is an emphatic indicator of the peculiar craftsmanship of the women novelist. It is evinced in her title of her words.

### ***Cry, the Peacock* - The Significance and Message of the Title**

In *Cry, the Peacock* Anita Desai has embedded a sentimental theme of feminist interest through word manipulation. The normal peacock's cry has gained significance in the inverted title *Cry, the Peacock*. It is not the cry of the bird alone that is symbolic but also the bird itself. The title is thus made of a combination of two symbols spelt out in three words comprising a verb followed by a noun indexed with the definite article. The otherwise erotic cry of the peacock with a conventional romantic significance is deciphered and the message is reversed.

### **Significance of the Names of Characters**

Anita's title suggests an abnormality in the slice of a woman's life – Maya having been mismatched in her marriage to Gautama. Like the Buddha he is totally detached from physical and carnal pleasures while Maya longs for the satisfaction of physical needs. More than the title, the naming of the two main characters is thoughtful and appropriate to the story; Gautama a synonym of renunciation and Maya is shrouded by earthly illusions.

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Tracing deep into the meaning contained in the title words and name-words, the reader-critic accepts them as a play with words which exhibits originality. There is an incongruity in the man–wife relationship that indirectly suggests the many other conflicts in Maya’s life situations.

### **The Mode of Narration – Stream of Consciousness**

The mode of narration in *Cry, the Peacock* follows the stream of consciousness technique. The first person narrative by the protagonist Maya is effective, interrupted by the speaker’s asides, comments and long and short self–addressed loud thoughts. The narrative manner is impressive as Maya’s story is dramatized by Maya herself.

The length of the text presents many melodramatic scenes that provoke the reader-critic to call this novel not only as fictional drama but also as a comedy of errors.

### **Structure and Language**

The novel has three parts; the first part just gives a background about the death of Toto. In the second part, which consists of 17 chapters, we see the bewildering story of Maya. In the final part, the novelist’s authorial comment is given. The language is poetic, full of images and fascination. So it is a 'well–made' novel.

### ***Fasting, Feasting* – Significance of the Title**

Likewise, the title of Anita Desai’s second novel *Fasting, Feasting* challenges the reader-critic’s interpretation. Apart from the alliteration offered by the two titular words when vocalized, there is also a suggestion of the alternation of joys denied and happiness satiating.

The surface meaning of the words Fasting and Feasting is too simple and connected with eating. But at a deeper level the titular –‘ing’ verbs convey an intellectual, meaning. Separated by a comma, the two verbs in the present progressive tense contribute to a higher level of

meaning and interpretation. They represent two different cultures precipitated in the human societies of the East and the West in eating habits.

Searching for significance the title sounds strange and highly original and even misleading. A casual reader may expect a series of episodes related to the two activities fasting and feasting. However the discourse reader cannot miss the implications behind the word usage in this title. The title takes the reader-critic beyond the surface to think of the East–West encounter. The implicit theme is an incompatibility among characters in a domestic drama.

### **Narrative Techniques**

The narrative technique is commendable. Third–person universal observer technique of narration is employed. In most of the cases the novelist seems to identify herself with every character and gives expression to everyone’s view point all though she always keeps herself in the background. She does not employ the traditional stream of consciousness technique here; in most of the descriptions the character’s view-points prevail. Thus, there is unity of tone and structure and yet at the same time an impression of variety within unity. The narrative is straight and simple although there is running back to past in the present without complications.

### **Structure and Language of *Fasting, Feasting***

The book is divided into two parts, with Part I mostly describing the Indian theme and Part II dealing with the story of Arun in America. In a nutshell the novel is an uneventful story of two families, one Indian and the other American. The entire narrative structure is built in concrete words which are mostly monosyllabic with simple diction and precise description. Brief and brisk dialogues move the story forward and provide a dynamic flow to the plot.

### **Peculiarities in Discourse**

Peculiarities in discourse writing are certain significant and identifiable technical specialties of the writer. It is not literary aspects alone that decide the merit of the work but the

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language parts too. The use of various components of language is mandatory for text scripting and the selection and application of the different phonic and graphic elements.

Non-speech part of the dialogues as meaningful communication which is beyond words are actually concerned with direct feeling of characters. A deliberate interplay of speech and silence, speech and pause evidences craftsmanship. Such combinations are not a simple contrast of sound and stillness in dialogue but of articulated speech and unarticulated speech. In *Cry, the Peacock* there are several poetical and prosaic parts of discourse text which contains silence and pause as speech intercepts.

### **Craftsmanship**

Craftsmanship is identifiable even in the use of punctuation marks particularly dash. Anita Desai's pause is alarming and abounds in meaning. Maya, the protagonist in *Cry, the Peacock*, is herself shrouded in a melodramatic emptiness. A climate of void is suggested whenever she talks to herself, appears to be thinking loud or lapsing into a monologue. These monologues are a kind of dialogue - Pauses which act like a bridge between the speaker and the readers. In some places these pauses in the form of monologues are self-addressed speech patterns that help to maintain a kind of suspense, suspended by the author in the melancholic climate of the narrator's life.

The monologues considered as pause in dialogue between Maya and Gautama are significant gaps in the dialogues that retrospectively get fitted in by the readers themselves. To the intellectual reader-audience, a pause is not an abrupt stop. Likewise the elliptical marks and dashes in speech flow with their own functions. To them these symbols and speech signs gain interpretative meaning and appear more eloquent and more revealing projecting the speaker character's anxieties and needs in the situation. They are emphatic in conveying certain meanings related to the psychological condition of the speaker. Where words failed, these technicalities are introduced by these women writers in the dynamic pattern in the several dialogues in the text.

Examples are cited below from *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fasting, Feasting*.

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They say it attracts snakes – this sweet, intoxicating fragrance. Snakes, summer, scent, flower, white, white, white... In the dark, in the dry, scented April dark, the sky was dimly lit by April stars. I lay back in my chair and breathed deeply, lay there waiting – for summer? for snakes? for the moon? I did not know. (CP 12).

In this prose passage, the punctuation marks three dots and dash and question marks are found justified by their contribution to mood, tone, meaning, and style of the speaker. Dashes are also used in *Cry, The Peacock* for parenthetical inclusions of information. For instance there is a sentence which reads

'Death – a early one - by un nature causes,' (CP 30).

The speaker here is allowed to avail of two breaks indicated by the two dashes to include an adjectival phrase which acts a subject compliment and also makes the utterance more emphatic, suitable to the talk. The dashes help the reader-critic to gain a further meaning under a plain text.

Another notable aspect of the writer's language style is refrain that contributes to poetical prose. One comes across such illustrations in passages where the protagonist Maya breaks into hysterical rhetoric. To quote but one example,

Or is it madness? Am I gone insane? Father! Brother! Husband! Who is my saviour? I am in need of one. I am dying, and I am in love with living. I am in love, and I am dying. God, let me sleep, forget, rest. But no, I'll never sleep again. There is no rest any more- only death and waiting. (CP 98).

The introspective tone of the speaker Maya and the self-pitying mode and helplessness of her situation are well brought-out in this sequential string of utterances made of questions, exclamations, doubts and unending suffering.

## Exclamatory and Question Marks

Yet another feature of the style of Anita Desai is an abundant use of exclamatory and question marks while building up a rhetorical passage that is lengthy. In some places, passages are constructed by a gradual acceleration of tempo and mounting the tension in the speaker. One example invites attention.

'No, no, Maya, they have no lichees there, child. Figs, blue figs...'(CP 147).

'What? What?' and he jumps up, jumps up and down, while I sail higher and higher, farther and farther, crying, 'Higher, Arjuna, higher! Oh, see it sail, see me sail!' (CP148).

## Repetitions

Word and phrase repetitions are also another technical aspect of the text. A common speech pattern like 'Uma, don't! Don't you dare, Uma-'(FF 111).

The utterance contributes to the creation of a natural situation.

In many places Desai's techniques include very short utterances with piled-up imperatives. For example utterances like,

Uma cried to Dinesh, ' Shoot it, quick! Kill it, please!' (FF 106)

## Effect of Transliterated Words

Apart from the use of dashes, dots for mute communication in terms of pause and silence, the text of the discourse contain free and large scale use of transliterated words from the Indian vernacular establishing the Indian identity of the women writers. To quote but a few examples from Anita Desai's discourse texts the reader-critic comes across words like Ayah (32, CP), Chameli, Champa, Bela (CP 130), Gul-Mohurs (CP 159), The Gita (CP 111), Sunnyasis (CP 120), Pan (CP 134), Solatopees (CP 160) in Cry, The Peacock and in Fasting Feasting - Pilaos, Kebabs, Koftas (FF 14), Ayah (FF 35), Puris (FF 47), Samosas (FF 64), Mali (FF 148).

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The transliterated words do not disturb the equilibrium of the regular English prose style. Instead it is justifiable as it contributes to a readable and an effective prose style acceptable from an Indian creative genius.

### **Thrill through Plain Indian Style**

The reader-critic is thus taken through simple discourse text written in a plain Indian style and made to gain the thrill of a spectator watching a show of slices from Indian family lifestyle. Further the reader-critic also gains a new experience with language as dialogues used in the texts. The language texture is made of all the available elements namely phonic, graphic, lexic and grammar of English. The story is uncovered through the amalgam of sound and sense. The fervor of the story is intact even as the writers concentrate on the flair of language.

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